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AMERICAN FOUNDATION
FOR THE BLIND INC.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

on Preparation and Distribution of Educational Materials for Blind Children in Public Schools

Louisville, Kentucky
1959

AMERICAN FOUNDATION FOR THE BLIND, Inc.
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NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON PREPARATION AND DISTRIBUTION OF EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS FOR BLIND CHILDREN IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Sponsored by

The American Printing House for the Blind
and
The American Foundation for the Blind, Inc.

held at

The Sheraton-Seelbach Hotel, Louisville, Kentucky

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American Foundation for the Blind
15 West 16th Street, New York 11, N. Y.

FOREWORD

It seems especially appropriate that at the threshold of the year 1959 the American Printing House for the Blind and the American Foundation for the Blind should co-sponsor a National Conference on Preparation and Distribution of Educational Materials for Blind Children in Public Schools. Appropriate in the first place because the APH statistics of the preceding year indicated that the number of blind children being educated in the regular public schools approximated the number being educated in the residential schools. Appropriate, again, because both organizations in this cooperative effort were reacting realistically to the increasing demands from the field for a pooling of techniques and information in this important area.

No one can state the measure of inspiration and encouragement that each conferee received as a result of this mutual exchange of ideas in behalf of a common goal and our unreserved praise goes to those who planned and conducted the conference. This publication of conference papers is the concrete result of the meeting and in sharing it generously with pertinent persons and agencies throughout the nation, the Printing House and the Foundation join in the hope that the educational welfare of all blind children will be appreciably advanced.

Finis E. Davis, Superintendent
American Printing House for the Blind

M. Robert Barnett, Executive Director
American Foundation for the Blind

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I

AVAILABLE RESOURCES AND SERVICES OF THE AMERICAN PRINTING HOUSE FOR THE BLIND OF INTEREST TO THE EDUCATORS OF BLIND CHILDREN AND YOUTH

by Mr. F. E. Davis, Superintendent
American Printing House for the Blind

It gives me a great deal of pleasure to welcome you to Louisville for this important conference on the preparation and distribution of educational materials for the blind. The Printing House is pleased to join hands with the American Foundation for the Blind in making this conference possible.

It is indeed an inspiration to see such a fine representative group of leaders in the field of education of the blind present to discuss our mutual problems.

In addition to our professional representatives, we have several volunteer hand-transcribers present, and I should like to pay special tribute to them for their excellent contribution to the education of the blind on a national basis.

This is probably the most representative group of national leaders ever assembled to discuss this problem, and it is my hope that everyone will actively participate in the discussions and contribute as much as possible to the success of the meeting.

Before telling you about the materials and services available at the American Printing House for the Blind, I should like to thank Miss Georgie Lee Abel, program specialist in education at the American Foundation for the Blind, and Dr. Carson Nolan, director of educational research at the American Printing House for the Blind, for a job well done in working out the details for this meeting.

Perhaps, before I outline some of the services of the Printing House, it might be well to give a short account of the history of our institution which celebrated its 100th Anniversary during 1958, so that you may better understand our procedures and purposes.

History

As the oldest national agency for the blind in the United States, the American Printing House for the Blind began its corporate existence on January 23, 1858,

with the approval of "An Act to Establish the American Printing House for the Blind" passed by the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky. Located in Louisville, Kentucky, the institution has grown in its hundred years from a small printshop, located in the basement of the Kentucky School for the Blind, and publishing only a few textbooks a year, to its present position as the largest publishing house for the blind in the world, issuing hundreds of books and magazines each year in braille, large type, and talking book form, and manufacturing a wide variety of tangible aids for use by the blind.

The founding purpose of the Printing House was to provide a central, national printing house which would supply books and apparatus for all of the schools for the blind throughout the country. Experience soon proved that providing centralized facilities for the manufacture of books and tangible apparatus was not enough; a permanent and adequate source of funds was needed to aid the schools in the purchase of the books and aids manufactured for their benefit. Thus it was that the American Association of Instructors of the Blind in 1878 submitted a memorial and bill to Congress asking for federal funds for the Printing House. On March 3, 1879, this memorial and bill, substantially in their original forms, were adopted by Congress as the Preamble to and the Act of 1879 "To Promote the Education of the Blind," respectively.

The original grant was for $10,000 a year, which grant was authorized in perpetuity in 1906. In August, 1919, the first annual appropriation, to be in addition to the $10,000 permanent yearly grant, was authorized in the amount of $40,000. Over the years, the amount of the annual appropriation has been increased until the present over-all annual authorization of federal appropriation is now $410,000, including the $10,000 permanent grant. This money is used by the Printing House for the manufacture of textbooks and educational materials. The distribution of the materials so manufactured is made through quota allocations to the public educational institutions for the blind and to the state departments of education of each state and territory, the allocations being determined on a per capita basis computed by dividing the total registrations of blind pupils being educated in public schools or public educational institutions for the blind as of the first Monday in January of each year into the total appropriation for that year. For bookkeeping purposes, quota allotments are set up each July 1 in the form of credit to the individual schools for the blind and state departments of education, and materials are manufactured and delivered only upon orders received from the schools for the blind and the state departments of education. The federal responsibility for administering the Act is vested in the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

Other Activities

In addition to its responsibilities as the official schoolbook printery for the blind, the Printing House acts in its capacity as a national, private, nonprofit organization by offering its services to other agencies as well as individuals wishing to provide literature and materials to the blind. Just how important is this part of our work may be seen by the fact that, while a little over $400,000 worth of educational materials are furnished under the federal act each year, for the year ending June 30 last, approximately $914,000 worth of books, magazines and apparatus was supplied to the order of other individuals and agencies, such as the Library of Congress, the John Milton Society, the American Bible Society, the American Foundation for the Blind, etc., etc. At the same time, some 70-odd braille and talking book magazines are issued on regular schedules, mostly for other agencies, not to mention hundreds of braille and talking book books, etc.

As a special project of its own, since September, 1928, the Printing House has

published a braille edition of The Reader's Digest, and, since September, 1939, a talking book edition. To finance this operation, The Reader's Digest Fund for the Blind was set up many years ago in cooperation with The Reader's Digest Association, in order to solicit funds from the public for these publications, and to provide additional facilities for the institution.

In cooperation with Newsweek magazine, the Printing House has just established a new fund, for which we will go to the public for donations, in order to finance a weekly talking book edition of Newsweek, beginning January, 1959. I believe this is the first complete reprint of a national news periodical for the benefit of the blind, either in braille or in talking book. We look forward with pride to offering this additional service to the blind.

Administration

The administration of the Printing House, as a nonprofit corporation, is in the hands of a board of trustees consisting of an executive committee of seven lay citizens of Louisville, Kentucky, successors to the original incorporators; and ex officio, the executive heads of the public institutions for the education of the blind in the United States. No member of the board receives pay for his services, nor for traveling expenses to and from meetings. While the executive committee acts for the board in the interim between meetings, all policies of the institution are approved by the board of trustees. The officers of the board consist of a president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer, elected annually. Annual meetings of the board are held in Louisville in the fall of each year.

The paid administrative staff is comprised of the superintendent and seven department heads, e. g., plant manager, braille and large-type editor, director of educational research, production engineer, I.B.M., magazine circulation and fund-raising, and office manager. Two committees, composed of five ex-officio trustees each, advise and direct the production of materials supplied out of the government funds, e. g., Publications Committee and Tangible Apparatus Committee.

Administration of Federal Act

Having given you the above summary of all of the activities of the Printing House, I feel you would be more specifically interested in the procedures for administering the federal act, as follows:

1. On the first Monday of January of each year, a registration is taken of all of the blind pupils in attendance at the public educational institutions of less than college grade throughout the country. Such institutions include, not only residential schools for the blind and other institutions for the handicapped which conduct formal training programs for the blind (such as a mental institution or a school for the deaf with special courses for the blind or the deaf-blind respectively), but also rehabilitation centers for the adult blind which have formal training courses, public school day classes for the blind, and public schools which have individual blind pupils in attendance for which they do not provide special courses for the blind as such. With the passage of the last amending legislation in August, 1956, the responsibility for registering blind pupils was vested in:

    a. The superintendents of the educational institutions for the handicapped (including residential schools for the blind) having formal classes for the blind.

b. The chief state school officer of each state and territory. In this latter case, the chief state school officer is responsible for registering all blind pupils of less than college grade in the public day classes in his state.

For registration purposes, only those pupils whose vision comes within the following definition of blindness can be registered:

> Central visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye with correcting glasses, or a peripheral field so contracted that the widest diameter of such field subtends an angular distance no greater than 20 degrees.

2. On the basis of the above registrations, a per capita allotment for each pupil is ascertained by dividing the total number of pupils registered into the total appropriation for the fiscal year beginning the following July 1. (Thus the registrations taken this January will become the basis for the quota allotments as of July 1 of this year.) The quota allocation to each school for the blind or chief state school officer is determined by multiplying the per capita rate by the number of registrants for each school or department. These allotments are placed on the books of the Printing House on July 1 of each fiscal year in the form of credit to the schools for the blind or chief state school officers, and books and materials are supplied against this credit only upon order from the school superintendents or chief state school officers.

3. The money from the federal government is used by the Printing House solely for the payment of labor and materials, and a reasonable amount of administrative overhead. By law, no part of the grant can be used for the erection or leasing of buildings to house the institution. This means, in effect, that the Printing House must, out of its own funds, provide the necessary inventory for efficient service, as well as buildings and equipment, training of personnel, etc., which are necessary for the production of the materials supplied to the schools and classes out of the federal appropriation.

4. In writing the original Act of 1879, Congress stipulated that all materials provided out of the federal appropriation should be manufactured at the Printing House. The purpose of this provision was, and still is, to make clear that it was the intent of the federal government to provide the stable and continuing source of income necessary to the production of special materials for the blind, not possible of production on a commercial basis in the small quantities required.

Recent and Future Legislation

On August 2, 1956, Public Law No. 922 came into being as an amendment to the original Act of 1879 "To Promote the Education of the Blind." This law not only increased the authorized ceiling of the appropriation for school materials to $410,000 a year, but also, and more important, made provision for the extension of the benefits of the appropriation to every blind child throughout the United States, the territories, and the possessions, wherever that child might be educated as a part of our public school system. This now means that schoolbooks and special educational aids must be provided, not only for the children in the residential schools for the blind and the organized classes for the blind in public school systems, but also to the individual blind children who are integrated into their regular, local public schools, with or without the aid of itinerant teacher or other special services. The impact of this change can readily be seen when I report that, as of January, 1956, only 7,989 children were registered through the schools and organized classes for the blind for benefits under the act, while as of January of 1958, 12,024 were reported. Breaking down these last registrat-

ion figures (which were the basis for the per capita allocations for the current fiscal year), 6,436 pupils were reported from the residential schools, 189 from adult rehabilitation training centers for the blind, and 5,399 from the state departments of education, which agencies administer the funds provided for blind pupils being educated in both organized classes for the blind and in the integrated programs in public schools.

The impact of the above change in emphasis of registrations, to an approximately 55-45 ratio of children in residential schools vs. children in public schools, will be, and already is, far-reaching, if the Printing House is to be expected to give equal service to all blind children, no matter what their educational situations may be. Perhaps the most important, and costly, change will be the necessity of providing an extremely large variety of textbooks in each subject to meet the demand of the blind child in a public school, for the same textbook in braille or large type as is used by his seeing classmates. We have plans in mind to attempt to meet this problem, which I shall mention a little later.

Another impact from this change in legislation is the enormous increase in the number of blind children to be served. A jump from approximately 8,000 to over 12,000 pupils in two years, which no one was able to project only two years ago, has cut the per capita rate to about $33 per pupil at the present $410,000 limit of authorization, and that in the face of rising production costs, plus the need to provide a wider variety of materials which, by reducing the total sales for any particular book or item, inevitably increases unit costs. Cooperative study is underway between the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare and the American Printing House, looking to further Congressional amendment of the basic act, not only to increase the ceiling of authorization, but also to augment the effectiveness of the administration of the act itself, one important point in this connection being representation on the ex officio board of trustees of the Printing House for the state departments of education which administer the funds for the public schools in their states. Hopefully, this legislation will be put into effect by 1960.

Materials Available on Quota Accounts

In keeping with its purpose as a publisher of literature for the blind and the manufacturer of tangible aids for their use, the Printing House offers five types of materials, i. e., braille books, magazines and music; large-type books; talking books and magazines; recorded educational tapes; and tangible apparatus. Published catalogs of all materials available on quota accounts, or for purchase as cost, are supplied free of charge to anyone asking, and we are happy to see that these catalogs are distributed as widely as possible.

Our braille catalogs list a wide variety of textbooks for the first twelve grades, plus library books and fiction for all ages, and also magazines and braille music selections. Paralleling a large proportion of the textbooks in braille is a catalog of large-type textbooks, also for the twelve school grades. Since the talking book has proved its greatest appeal as a medium for recreational or adult educational reading, practically no textbooks have been provided in this form. The recorded tapes which can be supplied through the Printing House are dubbings of offerings from the University of Minnesota and Kent University, in the main, and are designed mostly for supplementary use in the classroom. The catalog of tangible aids is almost entirely of an educational nature, covering such items as braille slates, braillewriters, arithmetic aids, maps, globes, braille clockfaces and the like. Anyone desiring a set of our catalogs is urged to write to the Printing

House at 1839 Frankfort Avenue, Louisville, 6, Kentucky.

I know everyone here is interested in the situation with regard to obtaining braillewriters. As most of you know, the Printing House has been unable to provide Perkins Braillers on order, because of our inability to obtain the necessary subassemblies and parts from the original manufacturer, the Howe Press of Perkins. At the present time, we have some 300 unfilled back orders on file for Perkins Braillers and are accepting no additional back orders except from public and residential schools. The back orders will be filled just as soon as parts are received for final assembly. To relieve the situation, the Printing House has undertaken to manufacture a lot of 500 New Hall Braillewriters, which we discontinued manufacturing when we adopted the Perkins Brailler. This lot of machines has already been partly delivered, priced at $60.55 for the long-carriage model, which has now also been adapted to write twenty-five lines to the eleven-inch page. Orders are being filled on the usual first-come, first-served basis. If it appears that the Perkins Braillers will still be in insufficient supply when the 500 New Halls are disposed of, we shall consider making up another lot. The new model, light-weight Lavender Writer on which we have been working for several years, is still in the developmental stage, and the prototype is expected to be ready in about three months, with production late this year.

Research

Two kinds of research are constantly underway at the Printing House, educational and technical. As you may know, Mr. Samuel C. Ashcroft left his position with us as director of educational research a year ago to head up the teacher-training program for the blind at Peabody College. On January 1, of this year, Dr. Carson Y. Nolan was appointed director of the Printing House Educational Research Department. Since he has been with us, Dr. Nolan has been orienting himself in the literature in the field of the education of the blind, compiling a useful background bibliography and annotating the important works available, and has also made several visits to schools for the blind and departments of special education in the various states. He is now beginning research in the field of braille reading, with special reference to the perceptual aspects which involve tactual, kinesthetic, and verbal relationships, as opposed to previous studies at the Printing House and elsewhere of motor habits and the mechanics of braille itself.

In the field of technical research, two important projects are under way:

a. The development of a process whereby small editions of textbooks can be reproduced from original hand-transcribed paper copy.

b. Machine-translation of inkprint copy into braille through the use of automatic equipment.

This latter research, which is being carried on as a philanthropic gift by the International Business Machines, Inc., in cooperation with the Printing House, is designed to take advantage of the possibilities of modern advances in the field of automation. For the past two years, the Printing House has been experimenting with the use of IBM electronic computer equipment and the braille plates for a number of titles have been produced through this means. Simply stated, the equipment consists of a Perkins Brailler which has been adapted to emboss a braille sheet at the same time it is punching the information on a paper tape, which tape, in turn, is used to activate an electronically-driven braille stereograph plate-making machine for the actual embossing of the metal printing plates. The advantages of this particular equipment lie in the reduction of the highly trained personnel involved in making braille plates; two stereotypists are employed (as opposed to one stereotypist and one or two sets of proofreaders and copyholders), since

the second stereotypist is used to verify the work of the first, and produces a finished tape without need of further correction and proofreading. Additionally, the electronically driven plate-making machine, which embosses the plates by direction of the punched tape, produces plates of much better physical perfection than by means of the present regular stereograph process, in that there are no corrections to be made on the metal plates themselves, since the tape is correct to begin with, and evenness of dot height is achieved because the force to emboss the dots is delivered individually to each dot within the six-dot cell, rather than the same amount of force for the punching of six dots as a single dot, as is now the case with our clutch-driven machines.

IBM machine-translation of braille goes even further. If successful, it will not be necessary to use either trained embossers or braille proofreaders. Rather, anyone who can type well will be able to simply copy an inkprint book by typewriter, at the same time making a punched tape or set of cards of grade one braille. This tape, or set of cards, will then be run through a properly programmed IBM computing machine which will automatically produce another tape, or set of cards, in full grade two braille, which, in turn, can be used to direct the embossing of braille plates on the APH electronically driven plate-making machine. The advantages to such an arrangement are easily comprehended when one realizes that at present it takes at least two years to train a first-class braille stereotypist capable of embossing some thirty book pages per eight-hour day and do her own correcting.

Earlier, I mentioned that plans were in process in an attempt to meet the demand of the public schools and others for small quantities of special braille materials which are not feasible for production through our regular methods. We feel that the most exciting development at the Printing House in many years is our new process for vacuum-forming, from hand-transcribed paper copy, of plastic braille plates for the printing of limited editions. Miss Majorie Hooper, our braille and large-type editor, will explain our plans for this department at a later time during this conference.

Conclusion

In closing, I want to assure every one present that it is the sincere desire and ambition of the trustees and staff of the Printing House to offer equal service to all blind children, wherever they may be educated, insofar as the limits of our facilities will permit. To this end, we must have your cooperation in helping us to help you, in return for which we pledge you the best we have in the way of know-how and a determination to meet your needs. It is my hope that all of you will take advantage of the tour at the Printing House this afternoon and see firsthand our facilities and learn more about the services available at the American Printing House for the Blind.

II

THE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF BLIND CHILDREN AND YOUTH

by Miss Kathern F. Gruber, Director
Division of Research and Specialist Services
American Foundation for the Blind

This is a significant occasion for the American Foundation for the Blind and I am pleased to be here to represent our Foundation administratively as we open this conference which is cosponsored by the American Printing House for the Blind and the American Foundation for the Blind and to which so many of you have given of your precious post-holiday time to join us in our deliberations. I bring the regrets of our executive director, Mr. M. Robert Barnett, that he cannot be here personally. However, he has indicated his professional pleasure that our two organizations have joined forces and finances in an important national meeting and I am pleased to extend his best wishes as well as those of all our staff for the two and a half days ahead of us that they may result in solid achievement in this matter of preparation and distribution of educational materials for blind children in public school classes.

To set the stage for what I'm going to say this morning, I am taking the liberty of going back into my own professional experiences. Sixteen years ago this very month I was a braille class teacher at the Roosevelt High School in the city of Minneapolis, Minnesota. Among some twenty-eight hundred students enrolled in that high school, there were twenty-two students who happened to have very poor vision or were totally blind. These twenty-two sophomores, juniors and seniors each were enrolled in at least four regular classes and each used my headquarters as a resource room to which to return for study or special work. This meant that there were eighty-eight regular classes being attended daily by these students. Thus, there had to be a tremendous amount of current text material supplied in braille, in clear type, in recorded form or by live readers. And that, my friends, was no small job! I employed about twelve paid "live" readers a day, each available about one and one-half clock hours a day; I received some braille and clear type material from Central Office of the Minneapolis Board of Education; I had one civil service braillist assigned to my department full time; I had one textbook embossed by APH which was currently used by the Minneapolis Public Schools; and I had absolutely no volunteer help! I, personally, had to steal from my professional time to prepare the emergency material that would be needed in the regular classes each day! Sometimes we wonder how much we can do in one hour! I have vivid memories of some very full hours---brailling a German examination---setting up geometry figures on a so-called geometry board with rubber binders and Moore push pins with brailled heads or doing geometry figures in reverse by using an old

Singer Sewing Machine tracing wheel (I'd have given my eye teeth for a raised line drawing board at that time!)---of recording some grammar rules on those old wax Ediphone or Dictaphone cylinders that broke, chipped, or scratched every time you looked at them too hard---of hearing a youngster say plaintively, "Miss Gruber, do you suppose pages 29 through 50 of my history text will be brailled in time for next Thursday's classwork?"---and, heaven help me if a youngster came back from music just at that moment and desperately needed just a few measures of brailled music notation---that was a forlorn hope....I'd never learned the braille music code well enough to turn it out that fast....and then in this beautifully frantically busy hour the principal of the school might come in with a visitor and say calmly and with pride---"and this is the study room in which we provide the blind students with all their materials in whatever form they need!!!" This was one hour of frantic work---you perhaps can see why for three summers I directed a WPA Clear Type and Braille Transcription Project!!

I sometimes wonder how I did it! And again, I shouldn't wonder---I know! I think I really know!!....Have you ever seen the look of frustration on the face of a blind student when you've had to say to him---"Sorry, Bill, but those pages of your Latin text just haven't been transcribed yet!"....Have you ever seen the look of satisfaction on the face of a blind student when you put on her desk a completely brailled text and say to her---"Sally, here's your complete algebra text for this semester!"....Have you ever seen the look of pure pleasure that comes over the face of a blind student when you've said, "Dick, at last here is a braillewriter that can be reserved for your exclusive use!"? I have---and I really don't need to wonder why I put in those hours of work. I did it because I believed in what I was doing---and those blind children were worth it---every last one of them! They were worth it sixteen years ago and they're worth it now!!

And what of now---of sixteen years later? I am honestly wondering if things are any better for the many, many blind children and for their teachers who are continuing in this kind of work in increasing numbers throughout the nation. Have things really changed? Are the educational needs of blind children really being met in terms of our other production of 1959? Is there more and better equipment? For example, are quality braillewriters readily available to students, to transcribers, to teachers? Do we have current and complete national catalogs of texts---APH and volunteer---that may be obtained by those who can put them to maximum use? Do we know how many copies of each are available and the specific locations of the respective copies? Do we know what kind of core library of material should be locally available to every educational program? Do we know what kind of educational library services for blind children we might want to set up on a statewide basis? Do we know what kind of materials and equipment might be circulated regionally? Or even nationally? Is our sound recording---both disc and tape---supported by serious research in order to refine this medium and are we giving adequate attention to the maximum circulation of these recorded materials? Do administrators of programs---national, state and local---really know how and what and from where to procure what is needed in equipment and materials to meet the educational needs of blind children in public schools? Are teachers of blind children now actually spending a large part of their time teaching or do they still have to get on the material production line? Are we losing some of these good teachers because they have become frustrated by not being able to practice their profession? These are all questions that I'm asking! And I answer...Oh, yes! I think things have changed! Much, much progress has been made but it's spotty. It hasn't been pooled nationally for the good of all! I know we have to wait for these things to come about---heaven knows we've asked for national clearing house services in various areas---this need was expressed by those who attended the Pine Brook and Bear Mountain conferences! And Mr. Davis will bear me out in this---urgent national requests prompted the APH and the AFB to call this meeting to consider the consolidation of some of our scattered knowledge and put it into usable form for national consumption! And look at the resources we have in this room!! The APH, the AFB, Library of Congress, National Braille Club, Recording for the Blind, National Society for the Prevention of Blindness, U.S. Office of Education,

Department of Health, Education and Welfare, APH Publications Committee, APH Committee of the National Association of State Directors of Special Education.

Why, it seems to me that right here in this room we actually have the core people who can do this task of consolidating our scattered knowledge into usable form!!

Somehow or other, words beginning with the letter C seem especially appropriate right now! We have a Cause---the Challenge presented by Children---blind children! I think we have the Courage to Crusade in their behalf. But, we need communication among us---cooperation, coordination, circulation, collaboration and collusion in the positive sense! And, Mr. Davis, you and I know we may need more cash, or coins or currency. And we ought to be able to get it! If in late 1958 from Cape Canaveral we could launch an Atlas with a tape recording inside of it and thus establish interplanet-satellite communication, we can certainly use these coming two and one-half days and from this launching pad here in this hotel crystallize some principles and procedures which will establish some orderly, horizontal interstate communication relative to meeting these material needs of blind children. You people have the skill, the knowledge, the experience, and the will to do or you wouldn't be here. Miss Abel and Dr. Nolan, I claim that the potential for our little Cape Canaveral launching is certainly right here in this group in this very room---and I think you'll have many of the answers you want by Wednesday noon!!

III

THE RESOURCES OF VOLUNTEER BRAILLE TRANSCRIBERS IN THE EDUCATION OF THE BLIND

by Mr. Bernard M. Krebs
Librarian and Braille Instructor
New York Guild for the Jewish Blind

The utilization of local school facilities in the education of blind children augurs well for the development of desirable personality traits and for a realistic atmosphere of normal social experiences. As a corollary, the warmth of the family setting, the comradery of sighted classmates and playmates, the competition for recognition and grades, the awareness of community attitudes and obligations, all fall into place in laying a sound foundation at an early period of development which will bear strongly upon an adequate adjustment to adult life.

Hence, administrators and educators involved in integrated school programs have the grave responsibility of setting and maintaining the same standards for all students in order that the obligation to perform is recognized and that good work and study habits will be formed. Outside of subjects such as penmanship or drawing which rely wholly upon sight, no quarter must be given in the requirement of equal performance so that the intrinsic value of integration will not be negated. To be justly fair to any student, excuses of omission or commission must be judged on fact, not on sympathy. For example, a student whose excuse was accepted for not submitting his first composition assignment also confidently neglected to produce the next five. The teacher finally informed him that if he failed to bring in all six assignments within two weeks, he would not pass the course. Obviously, he produced. Had the teacher continued to ignore the requirement of equal performance on the grounds that the student was blind, a detrimental pattern of escape from responsibility could have been encouraged.

The problem of adequate textbook supply still presents a formidable barrier to the primary goal of successful integration of blind children into local school programs. Even after principals and teachers have been convinced of the validity and value of integration, the question of available sources of supply for equivalent study tools cannot as yet be fully answered. The challenge can be met only through the combined efforts and skills of professional and volunteer workers.

Through federal act and grant, the American Printing House for the Blind has been specifically designated to produce and provide on a quota basis the necessary textbooks and tools which are essential to the education of blind children. Directors of residential schools for the blind have availed themselves of this law by giving the time and effort necessary to make their wishes known. It is only in the

past few years that administrators of integrated school programs have recognized their responsibility to express their views as to the publication of textbooks which would be required by the general public school system. In this area, the selection of specific texts has been complicated by the fact that study material for a given grade varies from state to state and that even within a state the teacher is usually given the privilege of choosing any one of the three approved textbooks for the course. Obviously, the facilities and funds of the Printing House could by no means be expanded to cope with such highly diversified requirements. Therefore, the books which are used most widely warrant consideration for publication.

Although every advantage should be taken of Printing House facilities, the full solution to the problem of textbook supply can only be found in the limitless resource of volunteer service. Throughout the country there are hundreds upon hundreds of well-trained, well-equipped volunteer transcribers who have the capacity and ability to cope with the textbook requirements of every individual student. With proper supervision and direction, this wealth of volunteer service can be channeled into local school programs thus assuring that each blind child will be given the advantage of having on hand the braille edition of textbooks which are being used by sighted classmates. This is not merely wishful thinking. This goal has already been reached on a statewide level and there seems little reason to assume that it cannot be achieved on a broader horizon.

In New Jersey, for example, a highly successful model program of integration has been developed which utilizes both professional and volunteer resources. The state has assumed the responsibility for the supervision and implementation of educational facilities. A professional staff including a director of special services, a librarian and itinerant teachers carry the responsibility of programming and coordination. Their primary duties are to evaluate the educational potential of the student, to give counsel and aid to teachers and principals, and to supply the special equipment and tools which permit the blind child to function in the local school setting. An excellent corps of volunteer transcribers, binders, and recorders has been developed to meet the diversified requirements of students and a library of press-made, hand-transcribed, and recorded textbooks has been established from which both the student and teacher may draw.

The basic element in the success of this and similar programs is an adequate source of textbook supply. Certainly, the great advantages accruing from professional supervision and direction cannot be gainsaid but, in the event that these services are limited or lacking, the student can still meet with success in a competitive setting through the aid of braille and recorded textbooks. It is interesting to note that several years ago a young lady of twelve was removed from a residential school for the blind on the grounds that she was both uncooperative and backward. Back again in the warmth of her own home and community environment, the child was enrolled in the local grammar school and with the aid of textbooks furnished by volunteer transcribers, she achieved honor rating term after term.

To insure that the volunteer service program functions with maximum efficiency, educators must assume the responsibility of anticipating textbook needs well in advance of the commencement of a course. When the inkprint text is supplied at least four months beforehand, the material can generally be transcribed, proofread, and bound in good time for the course. Except in the instance of a state-sponsored program, requests for service are most frequently received shortly before the opening of school and the transcriber is put under undue pressure to turn out the work chapter by chapter and the material must then be supplied without either being proofread or bound. It is also true that even when sufficient advance notice has been given, poor planning by school authorities may upset the normal routine of service. A new or different textbook may be announced at the opening of the course and it is therefore virtually impossible to meet the emergency

through volunteer service. Only a year ago, two young men who were performing well in a parochial school with the assistance of volunteer transcribers were transferred to a residential school for the blind because of a last-minute change in an algebra text. To cope with similar emergency situations, the employment of a capable braille transcriber as part of the overall plan would not be amiss.

In the light of two recent developments, educators have been placed in a more favorable position for the procurement of textbooks for local school programs. First, the American Printing House for the Blind has developed a new duplicating process by means of which an original manuscript prepared by a volunteer transcriber can be used for the reproduction of additional copies. As a result, texts which are too costly to produce by printing press can be made available in small runs. Second, the National Braille Club, a nationwide organization of men and women engaged in all phases of volunteer service, has turned over its textbook resource file to the Printing House. Through the use of this file, teachers or students can now be quickly informed as to whether a specific title is listed and if so whether it can be borrowed or purchased from a library or agency. By channeling all inquiries concerning textbooks to the Printing House, it will now be comparatively easy to determine whether one, a few, or many copies of a specific title should be produced. The net result will be a more proficient and adequate textbook service.

These new developments help to underscore the fact that in view of the great variety of textbooks required by students in local school settings, volunteer transcribers and recorders must be in the forefront of a successful program of integration. Volunteers have been taught that their primary obligation is to blind children in their own community, but the time is now at hand to review this myopic point of view. Since more and more blind children are being enrolled in public schools throughout the land, equipment must be provided which will give each a fighting chance for success. Volunteer transcribers can render a greater service to the whole community by assuming responsibility for only those assignments which require concentrated study and thus leave the simpler material to reading or recording services. The point has not yet been reached in training programs for volunteers where there are a sufficient number of braillists to supply all the texts that are needed.

It is incumbent upon administrators and educators to utilize the special skills of volunteers to the greatest advantage. The student will be served best if, through far-sighted planning, the assignment of essential text material can be placed well in advance of the actual need. Volunteers richly deserve this consideration and cooperation for they are happy to give of their time and their skills without stint in service to their fellow men. With proper guidance they can provide the solution to the problem of adequate textbook supply.

IV

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM FOR BLIND CHILDREN AS DEVELOPED BY THE NEW JERSEY STATE COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND

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Throughout its history, New Jersey has maintained an individualized program for the education and welfare of blind and partially seeing children. This has involved the philosophy that educational planning should take into consideration, as full as possible an understanding of each child's total situation, including not only a look at the immediate problem, but a long, broad view of the child, and the family, and the community of which he is an integral part. Implementation of this philosophy requires flexibility in selection of facilities.

From the earliest law passed in 1836 all schools and welfare legislation has provided for a selection of programs for the education of blind children. For over forty years, the laws have included provision for not only the school-age blind but also the partially blind, the pre-school, and those seeking advanced training in colleges, professional or technical schools. Slightly over fifty years ago a group of public-spirited citizens became interested in the welfare and education of the blind. Their efforts resulted in:

1. A survey of the condition of the blind in New Jersey's largest city --- Newark.
2. The establishment of a state commission for the blind.
3. Opening of a program for blind children in the public schools of Newark.

Since that time the educational programs for blind and partially seeing children have been a joint responsibility of the New Jersey State Commission for the Blind, the State Department of Education and local school districts --- with public-spirited citizens providing important complementary services.

The Educational Services Division of the Commission for the Blind maintains a registry of blind clients from infancy, through university graduate training, and of those partially-seeing clients attending school who appear to have special educational needs. Thus far, this year, the number on the register has averaged about 1,200 who may be classified in the following breakdown: In preschool service --- 150; in regular classes in local elementary schools --- 450; in regular classes in local secondary schools --- 75; in city programs for the education of the blind --- 60; in city programs for the partially seeing --- 170; in residential facilities --- 85; in higher education and advanced training --- 35; retarded children not in schools or institutions --- 50; blind children in state institut-

ions for the mentally retarded --- 125. There will probably be registered with this department during the year a total of about 1,400 clients, 200 of whom will have been removed from the register as having improvement of vision, not being eligible for services due to too much vision, moving out of the state, or other reasons. These figures are in round numbers as they change almost daily. However, on June 30th of each year an accurate count is recorded. Attached are the statistics for June 30, 1958, and the four years previous to that, as well as June 30, 1948.

A description of the New Jersey Plan for the education of blind children must begin with the preschool program as, without it, the remainder of the program would be much more difficult, if not impossible. A counseling service to parents of blind preschool children is offered by the educational counselors of the Commission for the Blind. These counselors hold New Jersey State Department of Education certification as teachers of children with normal vision, plus certification as teachers of blind children (certification requirements for each are attached). In counseling parents of preschool blind children, it is the responsibility of these workers to "sift out" the problems related to blindness from those related to child growth and development, and to refer parents to other professional personnel, clinics or agencies for those problems not related to the child's blindness. This frequently involves interpretation regarding the effects of blindness upon the child, or the effects of the parents' feelings about having a blind child. The Commission's part-time psychologist greatly assists in this phase of the program.

In order to help parents with their feelings regarding blindness and having a blind child, and to help them sift the problems, the Commission sponsors parent discussion groups. These consist of small groups of about eight to sixteen parents who meet for an hour and a half, once a week, for six or eight weeks, under the leadership of trained discussion group leadership. None of these have special training in education of the blind, although many do have considerable experience through repeated employment by the Commission for this activity. Most of them are associated with family service, or child guidance, clinics, a number being directors of such clinics. The parents' groups plan their own agenda which usually includes a number of resource persons to discuss with them such subjects as educational programs, vocational rehabilitation and employment possibilities, etc. Since there are a large number of parents and since the state is small, it is possible to plan selected groups which usually provide for a certain amount of homogeneity of interest and concerns.

The Commission at one time maintained a rather extensive toy library and books-for-parents library. These have been used very little since other preschool services have been more extensively developed. However, the library of children's recordings continues to be a very popular service, probably partly due to encouragement of educational counselors as a part of the long view reading readiness program..

In the course of the child's development, certain steps may appear to be indicated. One of these is enrollment in a nursery school with children with normal vision. About two-thirds of the four- and five-year old blind children in New Jersey have this experience. The ratio may be somewhat higher than elsewhere, since such a large proportion go on to a public school kindergarten program. Assistance in determining the advisability of this experience and in selecting a suitable nursery school is given by the educational counselors Financial assistance is also provided by the agency when necessary. This is through both state appropriation, and private funds provided by the South Orange New Jersey Lions Club, and may include a range from a small part of the tuition or transportation costs, to the entire amount. Educational counselors also consult with nursery school personnel, advising about the needs and abilities of a particular child, and the very few adaptations in program necessary. In the selection of nursery schools and interpretation of the agency' program, the staff of the State Department of Education who are responsible for early

childhood education are of tremendous value.

During the preschool period, much emphasis is placed upon understanding the child's potentialities and needs, including a diagnosis of additional physical, mental or psychological handicaps. Many persons are involved in this evaluation, including the Commission's educational counselors and psychologist, the child's pediatrician and ophthalmologist, other medical and clinical personnel, nursery school teachers and, of course, the parents. Between 40 per cent and 50 per cent of the clients registered with the educational services of the Commission have handicaps in addition to the visual deficiency. Locating adequate facilities for the diagnosis and treatment of these is one of the serious problems faced by the Commission's staff. There always seems to be a backlog of cases needing diagnosis and treatment. Every effort is made to have this done within commuting distance of the child's home in order that the parents and community may assume normal participation, and also because placement of the child some distance away often complicates the original problem by the separation of the child from his home, the impossibility of involving the parents in the treatment program, and the difficulties of communication by letter rather than direct contact. As, over the years, hundreds of blind children have received services from local facilities, the various clinics and special agencies throughout the state generally recognize their responsibility for blind children on an equal basis with others, and the personnel are usually able to consider the child without being baffled by his blindness. With the development and improvement of services for all children throughout the state, services for blind children become more nearly adequate. Where residential treatment is necessary, that facility is selected which seems best able to serve the child. This may be a special facility for blind children or one which serves all children.

The usual first school placement beyond nursery school is in the kindergarten in the child's own neighborhood. Of the present group of forty kindergarten pupils, four are attending schools for the blind (two of these are day pupils), three are in special programs for the retarded (two of these are in public school classes for the trainable), three are in public school classes for the visually handicapped, one is in a boarding school for cerebral palsied children, and twenty-nine are in their local neighborhood kindergartens. Among those in their local kindergartens is one who also has cerebral palsy, and another who has brain damage, epilepsy and a speech defect. The above forty does not include those blind children who, although five years of age or over, are not yet ready for kindergarten experience, or those with special problems in the nursery units of treatment centers, or those in state institutions for the mentally retarded, or other retarded blind children receiving home care and training.

Although there are numerous exceptions in either direction, most blind children in New Jersey enter kindergarten when they are nearing their sixth birthday. Most have had a nursery school experience prior to kindergarten entrance. This later school placement is planned whenever feasible because it is recognized that adjustment to a large kindergarten group is more difficult for the younger blind child, and because experience has indicated the advisability of beginning the reading program for the blind child prior to his entrance into a regular first-grade class. The time during the year when the individual reading instruction begins varies, of course, according to the readiness of the child. It has been found that this "head start" on reading makes it possible for the child to participate more fully in the first-grade program. Previously, this was a problem which sometimes resulted in poor expectations for participation on the part of the child and the teacher, which tended to extend beyond the first grade period. During the

kindergarten year, the educational counselor from the Commission visits the school frequently to interpret the child's abilities to the regular classroom teacher, to give instruction in areas in which the child is finding it difficult to participate, and to observe the child's adjustment and readiness for the beginning reading program. She may also supply some special materials and equipment, although this is not usually necessary since much of the regular kindergarten equipment is used by blind children. During this period a variety of reading readiness material is helpful. This year one of our educational counselors is assigned to part-time work devising and making original copies of material which volunteers are duplicating in multiple copies. Although most schools are hesitant and fearful when first approached regarding having a blind child attend, before the end of the first year, they usually anticipate and often request that he continue in that school---provided the special instruction will be given by the Commission.

In most cases, the child does continue right on through his local district school. However, occasionally, observation of the child in the kindergarten group, or at some later time, indicates that placement in another facility would seem to be wiser for him.

At this time, it might be wise to discuss some of the other educational facilities used. New Jersey's fortunate location, so near several outstanding boarding schools for the blind, has offered a choice of schools according to the individual needs of the pupils. For the past 123 years, New Jersey children have benefited from the opportunity to attend out-of-state schools for the blind, with arrangements for placement and payment of tuition and maintenance charges made by the Commission for the Blind. A number also attend the school department of a parochial institution for the blind within the state. Each year, for the past fifteen, the number of New Jersey children attending residential facilities for the blind has steadily increased---right up to this day when, if all has gone according to schedule, a young boy who has recently suffered a loss of sight and hearing, is entering classes in the deaf-blind department of Perkins School for the Blind. At the present time, about eighty-five children are attending eight different boarding schools or other residential facilities for the blind, about a dozen of these commuting as day pupils, and several others living at the schools but commuting to local high schools to participate with those with normal vision. All of the agency-sponsored pupils have been placed after consideration of the family and local community situations, the particular needs of the children, and the selection of the school that seems best able to help with the total problem. With the exception of a few children among those in the school department of the parochial institution mentioned above, each of these children has some special problem in addition to blindness. This number includes six children attending the Royer-Greaves School for the Blind, and about a dozen children at the Center for Blind Children, in Boston, as well as a number of others in special classes for the retarded in other boarding schools for the blind. It also includes two deaf-blind pupils and two cerebral palsied blind pupils, one with a severe speech handicap, and several with severe emotional disturbance. The individual reasons for placement of the others vary greatly, but are in the most instances associated with unusual circumstances within the home.

About 230 children are receiving their education in city programs for the visually handicapped. The establishment of a program for the education of blind children in one of the public schools, in Newark, New Jersey in 1910, marked the beginning of the development of this type of program. There are, at present, twenty such programs in eight different cities in the state. The 230 children enrolled in these programs divide about evenly between the legally blind and those with over 20/200 visual acuity. Seventeen of these programs are of the cooperative type. On the elementary level, under the cooperative plan, the degree of integration with the normally seeing varies according to the child, the teacher, the school or other factors. Each school system maintaining such a program, has full responsibility for its administration and development. There are, of course, state school laws, regulations and interpretations regarding these, as well as arrangements

for state aid. The county superintendents and county supervisors of child study (the latter work under the supervision of the state director of special education) advise regarding these. The Commission for the Blind offers consultative services to the school personnel and counseling to parents and pupils. Many of the partially-seeing pupils in these programs do not require the counselling or other services offered by the agency for the blind.

Generally speaking, children living within these eight cities, or within easy commuting distance of them, attend the city programs. However, in each of these eight cities and in many of the communities adjoining them there are some visually handicapped children attending other schools. For instance, sixty of the eighty-five children in boarding facilities live in or within easy commuting distance of these cities. On the other hand, there are also some children commuting to the cities from a considerable distance.

In discussing service to the remaining children (those above preschool level who are not in city programs or residential schools), it would seem wise to begin with the simplest---that for high school students.

In January, 1917, the first graduate of the Newark city program, a totally blind girl, entered a Newark public high school. This event probably marks the beginning of itinerant service for visually handicapped pupils in New Jersey. The program for placing blind and partially-seeing pupils in their neighborhood high schools has continued throughout the forty-two years with very little change in the type, although great improvement in quality of services offered until this past spring when a new project, which will be discussed later, was added. At present there are registered with the Commission 110 students in grades nine through twelve plus one high school graduate taking an additional year in a school for the blind. Of the 110, eleven are living in schools for the blind, four commuting from there to local high schools. All of these and the postgraduate students are braille readers. There are also nineteen in resource rooms in city programs, eight of whom are legally blind but none braille readers. Three are on home instruction from the district high schools, all having no more than light perception. Two of these have such severe additional physical handicaps that it is impossible for them to attend school. The third is still under treatment for other injuries suffered in the accident which caused the blindness. There are also seventy-seven attending local high schools. Of this group, twenty-two have more than 20/200 vision. The remaining number includes twenty-four braille-reading pupils. Services for those attending local high schools are provided according to the needs of the individual, but in almost all cases include the following:

1. Educational and vocational guidance with the Commission for the Blind staff working with high school guidance personnel. This broad area of service includes such activities as interpretation of the special needs of the student and explanation of the facilities and services available to him; providing vocational information; arrangements for special psychological evaluations, aptitude and dexterity tests, vocational interest inventories, personality inventories, achievement tests, and, for those planning a college program, the Scholastic Aptitude Test for the Blind and Partially Blind. Under this heading would also be included obtaining eye reports, arranging for new eye examinations if necessary, and, if indicated, purchasing special lenses or financing other eye care or treatment for needy cases as well as other physical examinations and treatment. Although the medical care of the child is, of course, the responsibility of the home and community, as with those who are not visually handicapped, a complete physical examination is now routine for all severely visually handicapped students sixteen

years of age or over because of its importance in vocational plannings. Under this general heading might also be considered assistance in extracurricular activities. As in the other facets of the total guidance program, there is a great variation in the needs and services given, ranging from none for those able to handle their own extracurricular activities, to encouragement and, occasionally, interpretation of the student's abilities to group leaders and so on, even to the point of actual teaching of certain skills to others. In the whole guidance program the chief function of the agency personnel is to help the student make good use of the resources available to all youth in his community, as well as the special services available to him, and to help him and the community recognize his abilities and understand his limitations but not exaggerate either.

2. Provision of special tools for learning. It is essential that the students have the identical textbooks used by their classmates in a form which they can read. Each of the twenty-four braille-reading students attending local high schools has every textbook for every subject available in either braille or recorded form. The one exception is an algebra teextbook which one student is using in an earlier edition that that used by the rest of the class. As all too frequently happens, the school made a change in the textbook after the one originally selected was partially transcribed. The algebra teacher felt that she could manage with an older edition which was already available in braille, if given a print copy of it. This type of situation is far from satisfactory and very distressing to all concerned. This usually occurs only during the first year that a school has a blind student before it is fully understood how important it is to notify the agency immediately of any textbook changes. Limping along with separate assignments does not ease the blind pupil's adjustment to a new school situation. In this particular case the problem is further complicated by the fact that in the school for the blind from which the student is transferred, he had not learned the Nemeth code or the operation of the braille writer. With additional services he is making the grade, but his year might have been more successful if he had had all of his books in the proper editions and the skill in braille reading and writing required for a public high school freshman. The shortage of braillists able to transcribe mathematics, science and foreign language books, is a very serious problem. It is hoped that the further expansion of braille textbook reproduction by the vacuum plate process, and the availability of a constantly current catalog of hand-transcribed textbooks will relieve this to some extent. This particular problem will become more acute during the next few years as an increased number of pupils reach the secondary and college levels. A detailed description of procedures for obtaining and distributing textbooks will be given by the Commission's librarian.

Although all titles published in large print by either the APH or Stanwix House may be borrowed from the Commission's library by students in their local schools, there is very little demand for those on the secondary level, with the possible exception of mathematics and language books. This may be partly due to the limited number of titles available in large print on this level. A more likely reason is that reading from a large print textbook is a much slower and awkward process. It should be noted that all of the high school students except the braille readers are able to read ordinary print, some without apparent adjustments, others with the aid of special low-vision lenses, regular or projection magnifiers, or by holding the material closer to the eye (which automatically magnifies it). Some who are slow readers make extensive use of sound recorded textbooks.

High school students are encouraged to write or telephone the Commission or the regional library for supplementary books in braille or the talking book.

These students must also have certain basic materials and equipment including a portable typewriter, braille writer, slates and styli, raised line drawing boards, playback machines for talking books and Soundscriber recordings, mathematics and science aids and equipment (geometry tracing wheels and wooden or wire geometry forms, protractors, etc.) aids for

shop or home economics, charts, maps, and so forth.

3. Reader service. In New Jersey it has been the custom to employ adult readers, usually members of the staff of the student's high school. This person not only reads material not available in the textbooks but also serves as a liason between the school and the agency notifying the educational counselor of problems that may arise and forwarding periodic school reports. Payment of the reader places the agency in a position to require certain minimum services and relieves the student of a feeling of indebtedness for reading that is necessary to his education. Of the present group of local high school pupils, thirty-six are receiving paid reader service.

Itinerant teaching (tutoring by a teacher of the blind) is seldom necessary on the secondary level. Exceptions among the present high school students include the boy mentioned above who needed instruction in the Nemeth code and use of the braille writer; another who lost his sight six weeks ago and is beginning braille; another whose vision has diminished to a point where he now recognizes the need for braille; and a girl who has had difficulty due to a poor academic background during her elementary school period.

Supplementary instruction, which differs from itinerant teaching in that the tutor is employed by the school to give individual instruction in subject areas and is not a teacher of the blind, is also rarely needed for secondary school pupils. However, this year five high school students are receiving this service....two because additional physical handicaps have slowed their progress; two because of the constant need to "catch up" after frequent absences for plastic surgery; and one because the school could not locate a reader for the much smaller pay offered by the Commission.

During the past summer an additional service for high school and beginning college students was established. This was a six-to eight-week period of diagnosis and training in the "efficient living skills." The program began with two weeks in residence at the agency's summer camp---before the opening of the children's camp. This was followed by four weeks and in some cases six weeks at the adult training center in Newark which is not residential and at that time had no adult trainees except two who were able to adjust to and contribute to a teen-age group. During this period each pupil was given daily individual instruction by the agency orientors in the techniques of travel with a cane. Some of the students had previous training, but none were efficient travelers. By the end of the period all were able to commute from their homes or boarding places to the center. Each trip involved at least two buses for all, and two buses, a train and a long hike into town for one boy. The good carry-over is illustrated by a junior in high school who previously had been automatically eliminated from after-school activities because of the need to catch a special school bus. This year he has joined the wrestling team and two school clubs and travels home across one of the larger cities in the late afternoon. He has also started on a dating program.

The students were also given counseling and instruction in table manners, grooming, social dancing, sports and other recreational activities. Each student was checked on proficiency in reading and writing skills and tutored if necessary. Almost all needed concentrated help in pencil-writing. Although most had had some instruction in this before, the need to sign the checks issued to them individually to take care of transportation costs was an incentive. At the adult training center there was less opportunity for athletic recreational activities, but what the youngsters called "the social arts program" was supplemented by daily instruction in machine shop for the boys and daily home economics, including preparing lunch, a several course meal, each day for the girls.

There were also informal discussions on ways of handling various social situations as well as vocational counseling with groups and individuals and personal interviews with agency professional staff.

In a program in which blind students are educated in their local district schools, it is a rare occasion when there is more than one blind student in a single school. The advisability of having blind children become acquainted with others similarly handicapped had long been recognized through the operation of the Commission's children's camp. The establishment of a special summer program for teen-agers gave opportunity for small group work for this age level...a period of development full of special questions and problems which blindness further complicates. The higher success in travel training, "social arts" and other areas, through group rather than individual instruction, followed by an immediate carryover into home and community activities, is perhaps the best possible evidence of the success of the program. Since the program was and will continue to be cosponsored by the educational services and the vocational rehabilitation services of the Commission for the Blind, with professional staff from each department working side by side at the camp and in the adult training center, a fuller understanding and closer working relationship developed which has extended beyond that particular project.

A program for agency sponsorship of higher education for the blind was established by a law of 1912. When the vocational rehabilitation services of the agency began to be expanded as a result of the federal legislation of 1943 (The Barden-LaFollette Act), the benefits available to students attending colleges or vocational and technical schools were increased. This area of the vocational rehabilitation program was retained in the educational services since it was felt that the type of professional background of the staff and the type of services offered were closely allied to that department. Of the thirty-five students in higher education and advanced training at this time, thirty receive counseling from educational services staff and five from vocational rehabilitation staff. Training programs for all are approved by the directors of both departments. Sound-recording and brailling of textbooks, preparation of other materials including examinations in braille or large print, and similar services to these students, are a function of the Commission's library. For those eligible, special equipment, a permanent part of the students' professional tools, may be purchased through vocational rehabilitation funds.

During the past fifteen years most of the efforts of the educational services staff, including those employed in the library, have been devoted to the itinerant teaching program for elementary school children. Ninety-three of the 450 children attending local elementary schools are receiving itinerant teaching services. This group is served by sixteen educational counselors employed by the Commission, and one itinerant teacher, employed cooperatively by eight communities in one county, and one itinerant teacher employed jointly by the school district and a school for cerebral palsied children. The latter two work with eight children each. The sixteen educational counselors serve a much larger number than the remaining seventy-seven but give actual itinerant <u>teaching</u> service to this group and a few high school students. The case load of the department is so divided that those counselors who have more itinerant <u>teaching</u> pupils have proportionately fewer <u>itinerant counseling</u> clients assigned to them. No counselor has more than eight itinerant teaching pupils and several have only one or two. Division of the case load to insure the most nearly adequate coverage for all children in all parts of the state is very difficult since it requires consideration of the special abilities and disabilities of the staff (for instance, some cannot drive, some work better with older pupils), and up-to-date information regarding the needs and program requirements of each child. This is further complicated by a serious staff shortage. (Inability to fill vacancies in positions already approved weakens the argument when additional positions are requested.) These considerations cause changes in case loads from time to time throughout the year...another example of the need for flexibility. It is the responsibility of the educational counselor to

review her case load and plan her activities according to the changing needs of the children, giving primary emphasis to the needs of those in the itinerant teaching program. As a rule, the braille high school students and blind preschoolers rank next in time and attention required. Those elementary school children who are able to read print do not usually require more than several visits a year in addition to the loan of special materials and textbooks. If those who are able to read print require individual tutoring, this is usually provided by a supplementary instructor employed by the local school district. The supplementary instructor is a teacher trained in work on the grade level of the particular child and is employed for a period not to exceed five hours a week per child. She is usually a former teacher who because of home responsibilities is unable to assume full-time teaching employment. The educational counselor from the Commission may advise regarding adaptations to be made according to the child's particular visual disability, as she does to other school personnel, especially the classroom teacher, and the parents. The counseling service for this group also includes provision of special materials, obtaining up-to-date eye reports, etc., as described for the high school student.

Supplementary instruction is also being given to some elementary school children on the itinerant teaching program. Although there are certain disadvantages in drawing a third teacher into the blind child's schedule, use of this adjunct has been necessary in order to provide enough individual help to so many children in such a scattered geographical distribution. Care must be taken to avoid having the child removed from the classroom too much, or at periods when he could be gaining a great deal from participation. With the educationally blind child (the braille reader) the educational counselor as the trained teacher of blind children has a special responsibility to make certain that the blind child has full comprehension of the subject matter and has available to him tactile materials which will make it meaningful, and a background of first-hand experiences. This requires very close cooperation between the counselor, the regular classroom teacher, and, if used, the supplementary instructor and the parents. Many counselors have worked out a system of notebook notations which are shared by the two or three persons working with the child. This, of course, is not a substitution for interviews but can suffice between conferences, and also provides a written record of the areas that have required special attention. Since the supplementary instructor and the classroom teacher are not trained in the education of the blind, it is the responsibility of the educational counselor to provide the specialized instruction and to give specific direction to others working with the child regarding ways to continue with this until her next visit. It is also her responsibility to be informed regarding the lesson plans of the classroom teacher in order that she may make certain that the blind child has the necessary supplementary reading and special materials or experiences to understand and participate in the classroom activities. A well-equipped library for the blind children includes "museum" articles such as rock collections, shells, articles peculiar to certain countries or to certain historical periods and other tangible substitutes for pictures. The loan of these to the classroom adds to the appreciation of the subject by all members of the class as well as to the concrete understanding by the blind child. A knowledge of the areas to be covered by the group in social sciences, reading, science, etc., enables the counselor to order from the Commission's library a supply of braille or recorded textbooks to be stored in the reading corner of the room or in a section of the school library, according to local practice for all children. It is usually possible to obtain from the the teacher or the school librarian a listing of those books in print which will be available to the rest of the class and to send to the school the titles available in braille or on sound-recordings in order that the blind child may have the enjoyment of reading the same books as his classmates

as well as some others which they may not happen to have.

The educational counselor also helps the child in his physical orientation to the classroom and the school. In New Jersey, it is possible to have the professional orientors of the agency assist in this. The child must have adequate, convenient storage space for the materials required in his daily work. He should learn how to keep readily available those materials and pieces of equipment most frequently used and when to notify the the library that the next volume or album will soon be needed, or that additional material will be useful, if available. The early learning to organize his materials to a point where he is able to adequately compete with others with normal vision, to make use of the special facilities and materials available to him, and make the adjustments imposed by blindness are some of the advantages experienced by a child in this type of program.

The amount of time per week that an itinerant teacher spends with a child varies greatly. Generally, those in the first two grades require much more time than those in the middle or upper elementary period. However, quite frequently one particular fifth grader may require much more time than a first or second grader. This variation is not entirely due to the child's native abilities or adjustment. It is affected by the activities of the particular classroom, the presence or absence of a supplementary instructor, the classroom teacher's interest and adaptability, the child's previous experiences, and almost as many other factors as can be imagined. Once the child has learned to type, much of the clerical or interlining activity of the itinerant teacher is reduced. At this point the child's integration into classroom activities moves forward rapidly. As it is her responsibility to teach the blind child to read and write braille, the itinerant teacher must also teach him typewriting and determine how early this can be done. It is also her job to arrange her schedule or to convince the classroom teacher to rearrange her schedule in such a way that the blind child in his tutoring periods with either the itinerant counselor or the supplementary instructor will not be removed from the classroom at a time when he could be gaining a great deal from group participation, and to help the classroom teacher recognize in what ways and how fully the blind child can participate. The pre-first grade reading experience, described under the kindergarten program, which enable the blind child to join a reading group at the beginning of his school career, has proved to be of real value in establishing attitudes toward participation on the part of all school personnel. Each of the braille reading children in the itinerant teaching program has <u>every</u> textbook in braille or recorded form, a brailler-writer, and other basic materials and equipment as needed including typewriters, raised globe, maps, drawing boards, etc.---with the exception of playback machine for talking books or Soundscriber recordings---of which we have a constant shortage. We are hopeful that a small, light-weight transistorized playback machine may help solve this problem. We also have need for more models and other "museum" articles.

Besides the above more usual types of school placement, there are a great many highly individual ones. There are, for instance, blind children in all types of special educational programs maintained by public schools, from classes for the trainable retarded, classes for the educable retarded, day schools for physically handicapped children, public schools and classes for the socially maladjusted, public school classes for cerebral palsied or orthopedically handicapped, private day or boarding schools for handicapped children to private or parochial day schools for all children. There are also a small number of children who have such severe additional physical handicaps, that they are unable to attend school for even part of a day. These children receive home instruction from the local district schools plus services from the Commission for the Blind.

The children's camp mentioned earlier is another adjunct to the total program in that it provides an opportunity to observe the children away from home over a concentrated period of time and also affords the possibility of special instruction in "social arts," sports

and other recreational activities, handcrafts and actual tutoring in subject matter. These brief summer camp experiences could not and do not substitute for year-round activities but serve as supplements to the school year services and often make it possible for the child to gain skills which will make it easier for him to participate in school or community group activities during the rest of the year.

An individualized program for the education and welfare of blind and partially seeing children requires not only flexibility in selection of facilities but also flexibility on the part of the staff and the cooperation of many persons, agencies and schools. As full as possible an understanding of each child and as full as possible an understanding of the program by the many individuals, schools, community resources and agencies is vital to the success of the program. Lack of understanding or misunderstandings may seriously affect a child's welfare. New Jersey has been fortunate in attracting to its program personnel deeply concerned with the welfare of individual blind children and willing to put forth much effort and time in the fulfillment of the needs of each child and the progress of the total program. The sincerity of the educational counselors is evidenced by the many hours of overtime and the fact that all of them have over the years steadily increased their porfessional training by evening and summer courses. Each counselor has a conference period with his supervisor and the departmental director once each month, and more often, as requested, as well as opportunities to participate in group discussions during monthly departmental staff meetings, quarterly agency staff meetings and meetings of smaller committee groups. Aside from the parents, school personnel, and the staffs of clinics and other community organizations mentioned earlier, many other citizens have taken a great interest and have performed great services on behalf of blind children. Their work includes fund-raising activities to provide a teachers' scholarship fund for the professional improvement of teachers of blind children in New Jersey, funds to supplement the state appropriations for nursery school education, the children's camp and other special projects. Chief among these citizen cosponsors of the program are the volunteer braillists, braille bindery workers, and sound recorders. Organization and encouragement of these groups has been one of the major administrative activities of the department. With the expansion of the Commission's library staff, this responsibility has in recent years largely been assumed by the supervisor of that area of the departmental services. Since it is necessary that blind children in classes with those with normal vision have available to them not only the adequate services of well-trained teachers of blind children but also appropriate and sufficient educational textbooks and other materials, a close working relationship between the professional and volunteer staff is especially important. A detailed description of the functioning of the Commission's student library would seem to be an appropriate follow-up to this discussion of the total educational program.

This paper is already too long; and yet many facets of the program have not even been mentioned---such as the county orientation programs for classroom teachers, state college courses for them, and the courses for the teachers of the blind. However, from what has been told, and especially after the description of work with volunteers which is to follow, it should be obvious that the New Jersey program has been developing for many years, and that it is a planned, cooperative program in which literally thousands of people participate each day: parents, educators in public, private and parochial day and boarding schools, personnel of community agencies and other resources, the pupils and many public-spirited citizens. It is a program that continues to grow in the number of children served and in the variety and quality of services. It is one which must continue to grow, if each blind and partially seeing child is to receive the best possible program for him. There are many, many unmet needs; but there is a great satisfaction in working together to solve them.

CLASSIFICATION OF CLIENTS REGISTERED WITH EDUCATIONAL SERVICES OF THE NEW JERSEY COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND

Total June 30, 1957	1,111
New Referrals During Year	209
Total Registration During Year	1,320
Closures	154
Registration June 30, 1958	1,166

	1948	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958
In preschool service	120	224	262	256	203	194
In regular classes in local elementary schools	184	255	274	295	328	389
In special classes for blind children	29	52	54	54	58	59
In special classes for partially seeing children	169	156	166	184	170	162
In regular secondary school classes	106	66	59	62	64	67
In residential schools for the blind	65	65	74	76	79	88
In higher education and advanced training	41	32	36	27	32	27
Retarded children at home (age 7 and over, not in schools or institutions)	41	37	52	67	77	67
In state institutions for mentally retarded	34	50	60	71	95	110
Unclassified (chiefly very recent referrals)	19	13	26	20	5	3
Total enrollment on June 30	808	950	1063	1112	1111	1166

LIBRARY SHIPMENTS	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958
Braille volumes	573	1218	1181	2271	2648	3251
Other library shipments	1419	2757	2893	3012	4317	4828
Totals	1992	3975	4074	5283	7065	8079

V

PREPARATION AND DISTRIBUTION OF MATERIALS AND THE WORK WITH VOLUNTEERS IN THE NEW JERSEY PROGRAM

by Miss Elise R. Mueller, Librarian
New Jersey State Commission for the Blind

To give you a clear picture of our procedure in supplying students in their local public or parochial schools with their required textbooks, we shall use actual examples---one from the elementary grades and one from high school. We shall take you step by step through the entire process, beginning with our request for the next year's needs and ending with the mailing of the book to the student. Because of the number of students who require these services, and the hundreds of books handled, we find it necessary to make use of various forms, file cards, directions to volunteers, lists of books already available, etc.

Requests for book requirements are made of schools and educational counselors as early as January of the year in which the books are needed. The sooner we can put them into the hands of transcribers, the better prepared the student will be to begin the year's work. Sometimes we are given a list of text requirements. However, experience has taught us that it is often wiser to have the actual texts sent to us, rather than a list. It is too easy to omit a piece of vital information, such as author or copyright date. These items are essential to enable us to check:

1. whether we have the book in our library;
2. whether it is available elsewhere.

Directly from the title pages of the books a 5" x 8" file card is made, containing title, author or authors, publisher and latest copyright date. At this point it is decided whether the book should be brailled or recorded.

Then the braille requirements are checked as follows:

1. In our own card file.
2. In the catalog of the American Printing House for the Blind.
3. In other sources, as the Library for the Blind, Philadelphia.

If all these sources fail, we:

4. Find a volunteer who will transcribe the book.

The information gained from the above checking is noted beside the titles on the

student's card.

For instance, Student B, 12th grade, requires English in Action, Course 4, 5th Edition, by Tressler et al. The notation beside the title shows that this will be ordered from APH. Second-Year French by O'Brien and LaFrance must be brailled. Mrs. F. will do it. Now a 5" x 8" card is typed with the following information: The notation "9 vol." in red denotes the number of volumes in the completed book.

For every book transcribed a mimeographed form goes to the publisher, requesting permission to use the book in this way. "CP" in red followed by check mark denotes that permission has been obtained from the publisher.

A 5" x 8" file card is made for each chairman (or independent braillist), showing authors and titles of every text for which she is responsible, with the date of mailing. The various file cards amount to a three-fold check on every text required. In addition we have been using a fourth check on these texts: A tabulation of every book by grade level of each text must be provided.

For further illustration, Student A, a fourth grader, requires nine texts. Beside six of these titles are the letters "Res" standing for "reserved," indicating that the books have been done in previous years for other students, and have been returned to our shelves. The other three, not elsewhere available, will have to be brailled and the name of the transcriber (or the chairman of the group) is written beside each title.

From the transcriber some books go to the proofreader, depending on grade and subject. All primary books must be proofread. But lack of sufficient number of certified proofreaders and lack of time enable us to have only certain books, such as spellers, proofread for upper grade students. However, it is expected that all transcribers proofread their own or each other's work.

Now the volumes are sent to one of the two binderies that serve the Commission. All volumes of braille are not in permanent binding when sent to the student. This is because most transcribers are brailling several books at a time, and cannot keep far enough ahead of the student to allow time for permanent binding. In such a case we use plastic spiral binding. (A great deal of this kind of binding is done in our own office.) Workbooks are bound in this way, as they are often marked with pencil or crayon and cannot be used again. Spirally bound books other than workbooks are sent to the binderies when the student has no further need of them, usually at the end of the school year.

In addition to employing different kinds of binding, we make adaptations in the size of books for children in the first grade. Preprimers and primers are transcribed on a small size page--- 7" x 8" or 8" x 10" ---and bound in volumes of forty to fifty pages or less to facilitate handling. These are double-spaced so that printing may be inserted over the braille.

When books are returned to us from the binderies, they are "accessioned"---in other words, made part of our library. Each volume, with author, title, number of volume, copy number, publisher and copyright date is entered in a book whose lines are numbered consecutively from 1 to---at present---15,700. In other words, each volume has its own "accession" number. Then three 3" x 5" file cards are made for each title; an author card, a title card and a subject card. These are not patterened on the Library of Congress cards, but contain the information that is of importance to us. A book card for each volume is made, showing the Dewey classification; author, title, volume and copy number, number of volumes in the complete book and the accession number. The back of each volume is also marked in white with the Dewey number, the first three letters of the author's

name, and copy number. On the book card the name of the borrowing student is entered with the date of mailing.

The volumes are then ready to send to the student or the school. This is recorded on the student's library card, along with date, type of material (braille), title and numbers of volumes.

Last year eighty-one braillists transcribed 190 titles, producing 914 volumes. In addition we bought 594 volumes from APH. However, the year's circulation, including these and volumes already transcribed, was 3,251.

The books are shipped to students in specially made fibreboard cases manufactured for us by APH. We have them in three sizes---to hold one, three and five volumes. We also use rigid and flexible corrugated cardboard, the first cut to the size of a braille volume.

The second largest category in our library circulation is large print for the partially seeing students. During our last fiscal year, 1826 volumes were sent out. However, our large print library consists of almost 5,200 volumes. The greater part of our large print books are purchased from APH. Some come from Stanwix House of Pittsburgh. Recently we have had to produce a few books in large print done by hand and on the large-type typewriter for children who found it impossible to read 18-point. We have not done as much work in this field as several other school systems in the country. Students in this group make extensive use of recordings, as well as magnifying devices, such as the Projection Magnifier made by the American Optical Company.

Many of the requests for these books come to us before the close of the school year preceding the one in which they will be needed. But they also continue to come after the new school year has begun. Lists are checked against available texts, and the schools are notified if certain ones are not available, in which case we request an inkprint copy in order to record it.

In order to help teachers to avoid requesting books that do not come in large print, we furnish lists of all available large print books, on the elementary and secondary levels.

In supplying sound recordings ---our third category--- to students, the same system for checking availability is used as for braille. Besides our own library, we use the American Printing House for the Blind and the Philadelphia Library for the Blind for talking books, the first to purchase, the second to borrow. For recordings on Soundscriber discs, in addition to our own, we can borrow from Recording for the Blind. We check with the New York office of this organization. It sometimes happens that the title we need is available in Denver, Chicago, Phoenix, or some other branch, and the New York office arranges for the loan. These are books on college and professional level.

If all these sources have failed, we have the book recorded by one of the volunteer groups that work almost exclusively for NJCB. There are fifteen such groups made up of about 120 readers. Last year they recorded 184 titles, which resulted in a circulation of 887 albums, including many already recorded. Stated in another way, 26,610 discs were sent out.

These groups, like the braille groups, may be affiliated with the American Red Cross, Junior League, National Council of Jewish Women and temple sisterhoods.

Occasionally there is an independent group or an individual who deals directly with us.

All members of such groups must submit a sample of their reading on a Soundscriber disc---about six minutes of fairly difficult subject matter, preferably technical material. At least two people of each group pass judgment on the test.

When the text book is sent to a recording group, specific instructions, such as "Read charts when possible;" "Record glossary first" and a model for the marking of the disc in braille and print are sent with it.

As the records are sent in by the volunteer, they are put into albums, made for us by APH, having ten pockets, each holding three discs. On each pocket the side numbers of the discs and the print pages covered are given. The back of the album is marked in white with the title, Dewey number and the first three letters of the author's name, album and copy number. The procedure for accessioning these is the same as for braille, except for one small point. Instead of accessioning each album, we accession each title. Therefore there can be as many as eight albums bearing the same accession number. Our latest accession number is 1,449, representing that number of titles recorded.

For the shipping of albums we use specially made fiberboard cases to hold one and two albums These also are made by APH.

It may prove helpful to note here the responsibilities of chairmen or individual recorders:

Quantity of recording:

To deliver to NJCB the required number of discs regularly and promptly

To notify NJCB if the requested amount of recording cannot be accomplished, so it may be transferred to another group

Quality of recording:

To check machines frequently for condition

To check all recording for mechanical or reading imperfections

To braille and label discs, or to see that this is done

To be sure each reader has a copy of Instructions

To instruct each reader in the mechanics of using SS, especially as to:
use of michrophone
use of volume control for voice modulation
care of machine

To be sure each reader understands rules for reading, especially:
abbreviations
italics
quotations
unrecorded bands, preceded by "end of chapter or section;" followed by "beginning of chapter or section"
footnotes
preview of material for fluent reading, involving analysis of book, age level, unusual or unfamiliar words, diagrams, graphs, etc.

To have poor recording reread promptly

To remind readers to refer to Instructions constantly

To inform readers of changes in rules or procedures

To return print books promptly, as they belong to school or student; in any case they are needed for use with the student's reader

At the present time there are 250 volunteers who make it possible for the New Jersey program to operate, 81 braillists, 122 recorders, 42 bindery workers, and a few who do large print by hand or on a large type typewriter. Most of the assignments of work are made through the chairmen of the various groups, but occasionally an individual is approached directly, usually to conserve time. Our work could not be carried on effectively without the telephone.

To assist them in their work, our agency supplies volunteers with paper, braille writers, recording machines and records, unless the organizations with which they are affiliated do so. Specific information about materials and equipment is given in a separate section.

When a new transcriber sets out to braille textbooks for the Commission, she is supplied with certain instructions about title page, page numbering, number of pages per volume, a correctly set up page, etc. Our way of doing these things differs from that of the American Printing House, also of volunteer groups in other states, but it has worked satisfactorily for us. A few of the more important instructions follow:

Title Page: Follow the model as closely as possible. The title page used by the Commission differs somewhat from that of the Library of Congress.

Volumes: Number of pages per volume changes with the grade level.
Books from 1st through 4th --- no more than 50 pages.
Books from 5th through 8th --- 70 to 90 pages.
Books from 9th through college --- 90 to 100 pages.
In a one-volume book the words "IN ONE VOLUME" should appear in the proper place on the title page. This should not be followed by "Volume I."
Glossaries, dictionaries, and foreign language vocabularies should be in separate volumes wherever feasible.

Title: The title of the book should appear on the first line of each page. After the first page it may be necessary to shorten a long title. At least three blank cells should be left between title and page numbers.

Numbering: Braille pages are numbered consecutively from first to last through the entire book. These numbers are placed at the upper right-hand corner. PRINT page numbers are put at the upper left corner. There may be two or three braille pages bearing the same inkprint number, depending on how many braille pages are required for one inkprint page. Each page should be numbered clearly and legibly in pencil on both sides just above the braille numbers. This is for the benefit of bindery workers not familiar with braille.

In closing it may be of interest to give you the numbers of individuals who received materials during the last fiscal year:

Receiving brl. --- 118
Receiving LP --- 159
Receiving SS --- 68
Receiving TB --- 86
Receiving equipment and toys --- 129.

VI

MULTIPLE REPRODUCTION OF HAND-TRANSCRIBED BOOKS--- CATALOGS, PRODUCTION, AND STANDARDS

by Miss Marjorie S. Hooper
Braille and Large Type Editor
American Printing House for the Blind

Late this spring, the Board of Trustees and staff of the Printing House announced the development of a new process of braille printing which will make possible the reproduction of small editions of braille books from plastic braille vacuum-formed from paper hand-transcribed manuscripts. Since that time, procedures have been set up at the Printing House to facilitate the production of books by this process.

Technically, the new process utilizes the vacuum-forming of plastics, which, of course, is not new to braille. However, instead of making the plastic sheet the end product for reading (which has many drawbacks, such as difficulty of binding the sheets, and unpleasantness to the finger), double plastic printing plates are made, similar to the metal plates used for printing books, and these master plates are then used to print small runs of a desired title. The purpose of this process is to take advantage of the work of the volunteer transcribers who make the original single, hand-transcribed paper copies. The embossed paper sheets brailled by the transcribers are used as the masters for making plastic printing plates, duplicate plastic molds being taken of each sheet which are then fastened in registry with each other to form the male and female printing dies, or plates, to be used just like ordinary braille plates for printing on paper. From there on, standard procedures for the binding of braille books are employed.

As can be seen from the above simplified description, the effective use of the new process will require the cooperative efforts of the volunteer hand-transcribers, the schools for the blind, public schools enrolling blind children, state departments of education, and the Printing House. As planned, the project will work in this manner:

1. The Printing House has undertaken to set up two master catalogs

   A. Master Catalog of Hand-Transcribed Textbooks for Grades I-XII in the United States

This catalog is similar to the catalog of hand-transcribed books carried on by the Library of Congress, but is limited to textbooks for the twelve elementary and secondary school grades. The public school classes and others now using the services of hand-transcribers, as well as the hand-transcribers themselves, are being asked to register with the Printing House all of the transcribed

texts embossed on a volunteer basis. This information is being compiled into a master card catalog, constantly being added to at all times. As designed, it will be possible for anyone in need of a particular textbook not in the regular APH braille catalog to write to the Printing House to see if the book has been transcribed somewhere, and to ascertain if the book is available for loan, on a sort of inter-library loan basis, for such time as needed by the student requesting the title.

B. Master Catalog of Plastic Plates Vacuum-formed at APH

This catalog consists only of the titles for which plastic vacuun-formed plates are made at the APH, being similar in purpose to the regular Printing House catalog of braille books printed from metal plates made by its stereograph department. It, too, will constantly be added to as plastic plates are made of new titles, on the basis of orders received by the Printing House. The procedure in this instance is as follows: Anyone in need of a particular textbook not in the regular APH braille catalog should consult the APH catalog of vacuum-formed plates. If the desired book is listed, a direct order for the number of copies needed should be sent to the Printing House through the usual channels. If the book is not listed, the Printing House will consult the master catalog of hand-transcribed textbooks to see if the title has been transcribed anywhere. If so, the Printing House can then ask to borrow the copy for a limited period of time, say a week, make the plastic plates, and return the original hand-transcribed paper copy to the lender. From the plastic plates made of any title, as many copies as are immediately necessary can be printed and bound, up to a total of twenty to thirty copies. If only one or two copies are needed on the first request, the Printing House will undertake to store the plastic plates against the need for future reprints, just as it now does with the metal plates it produces regularly in its stereograph department.

2. Because the original embossing will be done on a volunteer basis, the cost of the plastic plates will be confined merely to the cost of making vacuum-formed sheets, etc., which is estimated at between thirty and forty cents, as opposed to $1.50 and above for regular metal printing plates. Printing and binding costs will, however, be a good deal higher than the regular Printing House catalog items because of the small editions of one or two copies, as opposed to the larger editions of 150 to 200 or more copies of regular printings. Research into ways of reducing the printing and binding costs of small editions is under way at the Printing House and is of vital importance to the success of the whole project.

3. Because the actual manufacture of the books produced, as well as the plates, will be done by the Printing House, the cost of the books so produced will be chargeable to quota accounts.

4. The use of the new process at present will be confined to the manufacture of textbooks (for school grades only), for which there is insufficient demand to make practical their production according to usual method.

The advantages of the new process are manifold:

a. The result of the laborious work of each transcriber who produces a single copy of a textbook can be multipled many times, to the advantage of many children, without having to have the same book retranscribed by hand over and over again.

b. Each child in a public school class with sighted children can hope to have the same title in braille which is used by his seeing classmates, even though the book in question may not be widely enough adopted throughout the country to make it feasible for press-printing.

c. A complete catalog of all textbooks available, either hand-transcribed or press-printed, will be available for consultation at a central source at all times.

d. Books for which a single hand-transcribed copy is available can be reproduced in a short time.

e. Advantage can be taken of the federal funds for providing textbooks, so that the hand-transcribers can be released from the onus of re-embossing books by hand, and thereby can work towards the expansion of the catalog of books available.

In connection with the new process, the following should be carefully noted:

1. At the present time, only materials which have been hand-transcribed on a braillewriter can be used, since the dots made on a slate do not reproduce well.

2. It is much preferable that the original paper sheets from which the plastic braille plates are formed be brand new and not yet used by a student or reader, so that the braille dots on the hand-transcribed sheets are in the best possible condition, since there is an inevitable loss in dot height in the plastic-plate process (not to the original hand-transcribed paper copy, but in the plastic plates themselves).

3. Silnce the original embossed paper copy is in one-side braille, the copies printed from the plastic plates made from this copy will also be in one-side braille.

4. The process is not designed to meet the problem of short runs of original materials in a school plant or library, since the printing and bindery machinery employed are standard, expensive equipment, and because the molding and registry of the plastic plates for printing will require considerable technical skill.

In order to make this new project a success for everyone, it will ne necessary that all volunteer hand-transcribers and transcribing agencies, public schools, schools for the blind, and state departments of education cooperate with the Printing House in promptly registering all of their hand-transcribing texts, to the end that the central master catalog of textbooks can be kept up to date for reference by everyone at all times. In return, the Printing House has pledged itself to provide the necessary personnel and facilities to give prompt, efficient reference service at all times, as well as to provide for rapid reproduction of titles from the vacuum-formed plates.

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The above report, or substantially the same information, has been published in The International Journal for the Education of the Blind, The New Outlook for the Blind, and The National Braille Club Bulletin, in the hope of making the project known to the widest possible number of people whose aid and interest are needed to make it a success. So far, I can only report a fair beginning, in both the accumulation of the central catalog, and the reproduction of needed texts. Part of this situation is due to the fact that we deliberately made only a small beginning, so that we could feel our way gradually and not founder before we

got started. The rest of the delay is due, I fear, to lack of communications, and to timing. Our experience so far, however, has turned up a number of problems which I should like to bring to your attention, and, in some instances, to ask your help in finding a solution:

I. CATALOGING

A. Reporting of Titles---In order to set up a master catalog, we must have report on textbooks being or already transcribed, and to get these reports we must set up workab procedures which will net us routine reports from all sources. Our first help in this direction has come from the National Braille Club which has very generously sent us its entire file of reports from its transcriber members. To date, we have made up catalog cards for all titles on this list which were reported back through 1956, and have classif them by subject matter according to the classifications in our own regular APH braille catalog. Additionally, the board of the National Braille Club has entered into a coopera arrangement with the Printing House whereby all transcribers in the future will make thei reports of books transcribed directly to the Printing House, on the forms which we provid so that we can make up our catalog cards continuously. In return, we have promised to promptly send the reports on to the secretary of the Braille Club, so that the transcribe work can be listed as usual in The National Braille Club Bulletin. As of now, we have had only one or two reports come to us, but we are receiving daily requests for the report forms, and I feel confident we shall be receiving reports in fair quantities within the near future. This, of course, gives us a basic catalog, but I do not know how far it covers the field. Can anyone here tell us to what extent the regular reports to the Nati al Braille Club are representative of the total amount of hand-transcribing of public school textbooks now being done in this country? And what suggestions do you have for us to find the people and agencies doing hand-transcribing of textbooks for the elementar and secondary school grades?

B. Information Needed for Catalog Purposes---If it is important to know what book are being transcribed, and have them reported to us for the master catalog, is it equal if not more, important to have full information on each title. To our great disappointme only in the last year or two have the reports to the Braille Club given hardly more infor ation than the title and author of the book (and that most sketchily), the name of the transcriber, and the number of braille pages. It is imperative that the report forms which the Printing House provides be completed in full, to include the following inform- ation:

Complete main title and subtitle of each book, including series if part of a series; also edition
Complete Christian and/or initials, and surnames, of all authors
Name of publisher, with ALL copyright dates
Present depository of braille manuscript
Date of transcription (year)
Name of transcriber
Name of proofreader, or proofreaders, if proofread more than once
Grade of braille
Style of embossing (braillewriter or slate)
Page size
Page format (one-side, every-line; or one-side, every-other-line embossing)
Number of volumes
Pages for each volume
Total pages in book

The above may seem extremely detailed, but I can assure you that it is all most necessary information. For instance, if we do not know the author and complete title, as

well as the publisher, we may mix one title with another, since so many titles are the same or nearly the same, but may be on different subjects, and certainly for different grades. If we do not know the exact edition, shown by the copyright dates, how can we tell if the book available is the one needed for a particular child needing a specific edition? If we do not know the depository, or place where the title is now being used or available, how can we borrow it, either direct or for use in making vacuum-formed plates? If we do not know the volumes and pagings, how can we estimate the cost for vacuum-forming copies for others? And so on.

C. Making Up Catalog Cards and Classifying---This, of course, is primarily a Printing House clerical problem, but the question has arisen as to how the titles should be classified and filed for easy reference. Frankly, we should prefer to make the catalog as simple as possible, rather than going into a more elaborate system which requires two or three cards for each title, so that they can be cross-filed by title, author and subject matter. Is it the feeling of this group that filing the cards alphabetically by title under subject classifications, similar to our present APH catalogs, is sufficient? Or should we simply let the course of time prove what is needed?

II. VACUUM-FORMING PROCESS

In order to reproduce copies of books from hand-transcribed manuscripts by the vacuum-formed method, there are a number of operations which must be completed before the paper masters are sent down to the vacuum-forming department.

A. The hand-transcribed copy must be located, and arrangements made for forwarding it to the Printing House. So far, the manuscripts have been sent to us by parcel post, which means the lendee has been paying the postage. Actually, I see no reason why such manuscripts could not be sent to the Printing House by free mail, since they are on loan for our purpose. However, this raises the question of possible damage in transit. Should mailing cartons be provided by the Printing House, such as fibre-board containers similar to talking book mailing cartons, and, if so, how are they to get to the depositories when needed, and not delay the whole routine?

B. Before reproduction by any process can be undertaken by the Printing House, we must secure permission to reprint from the publishers and/or copyright owners of the inkprint text. This is necessary because any original permission to reprint is issued for the original, single copy, and the Printing House automatically becomes the publisher when it reproduces additional copies. Ordinarily, this should not impose any difficulty, because we deal with the publishers all of the time. However, in the case of anthologies, and the like, where individual permissions are required for each poem or excerpt, the problem can become most involved. The suggestion has been made that the Printing House undertake obtaining permissions for the transcribers of textbooks, as well as it now does for its regular braille department. I can see justifiable objections to such a procedure in many cases, but I also feel that the publishers are becoming more and more disturbed at the myriad of requests for permissions that they receive every day from all sources, and the situation may arise in the not too distant future where a centralized agency will be required to take over the obtaining of permissions.

C. Once the manuscripts are received at the Printing House, they must be checked carefully to see that:

The pages of each volume are in order, and the page numbers follow consecutively.
The title pages are complete, giving full information as to title, author, publisher, copyright dates, transcribers, etc. (For some reason, transcribers seem indifferent to giving full information on title pages.)
The braille sheets have not been damaged, so they will reproduce well. If the pages look bad, we have been taking a stylus and laboriously bringing up the dots by hand....Additionally, we have re-brailled many pages, particularly of graphs made of scotch tape or using APH graph paper pasted on the manila sheets, since these do not reproduce well enough for plastic plates.

D. If the volumes come to us piecemeal, we must check constantly to see that we receive succeeding volumes in time to meet the needs of the students for whom we are making copies. This has not proved as easy as it looks, since often the student for whom a title is originally transcribed does not follow the inkprint title consecutively, and the volumes come to us in a helter-skelter order, to the inconvenience of the student for whom we are making a copy. Timing, therefore, is most important. However, since vacuum-formed plates are best made from new, unused braille copy, the problem then arises as to how to know when copies are needed in time to make plates before the original copy is required by the student for whom it was transcribed. Has anyone here yet figured out how to anticipate such a need?

E. Decision must be made as to how to bind the reproduction copies. So far, we have been using a plastic ring-binding, which is not cheap, but is quick so far as production goes. Hopefully, we can shortly go to the cheaper saddle-stitched binding, whi is not possible with single-page sheets as we are now printing.

III. STANDARDS

The questions I have raised above are all more or less related to the routining of service and production. So far, we have not tackled the questions of standards of embossing, proofreading and uniform presentation of copy. Just how much responsibility should the Printing House take for the quality of braille in the books we reproduce, or should we all make a concerted effort to use this opportunity to set good standards for hand-transcribers of textbooks? I am thinking of such items as:

Number of braille errors permitted in so many pages.
Number of proofreadings---and should these proofreadings be by certified proofreaders
Systematic way of handling pictures in inkprint copy, including the editing of text presented in visual terms.
Systematic way of presenting graphs and diagrams.
Systematic presentation of inkprint page numbers.
Uniform format for title and contents page.
Uniform page sizes---including designated page sizes for different grade levels.
And so on.

As the situation stands now, the Printing House cannot take any responsibility for the qua of braille, or the format of presentation, in the original manuscripts which we reproduce. The only thing we can require is that the dots be of sufficient height to reproduce suffic ly well by the plastic-plate process, and this we feel requires at present the use of a braillewriter, since slate material is too often uneven in dot height, and most usually the dots are broken through, which make for poor reproduction. Personally, I am torn betw the desire to "get the show on the road" and not to set too many problems in the way, and the possibility of giving the whole project a bad name because of poor standards of braille. Also, I cannot help but be sympathetic with my regular stereotypists when they

at having to re-braille odd pages which do not come up to the standards we require of them in our regular plate-making department. On the other hand, we are faced with an urgent need for books for individual children in individual situations, and I feel a compromise must be made. Only the teachers of these children, or the children themselves, can tell us all the difficulties we impose by trying "to get by" with indifferent braille.

In view of the above situation, may I make the following suggestions: Would it not be possible to set up several grades of certificates for braille transcribers and proofreaders? For instance, the original certification by the Library of Congress would cover the transcription of easy copy. Another certificate would cover textbook transcribing, such as beginning readers, tabular material, and foreign language grammars, and the like. A third certificate would cover mathematics, a fourth braille music. And so on. I am not sure who should conduct the courses, and who should issue the certificates, but I do feel that a workable system should be devised which would also provide for a periodic checkup to keep the transcribers up to minimum levels in the different fields. Since we have a number of able transcribers here today, I should like to pose the question to them, and would appreciate their reactions to the suggestion.

In closing, I should like to assure all of you of the deep interest in this new department taken by Mr. Davis and the Printing House staff. We are all a little awed at the possibilities which it offers, but are not unaware of the Pandora box before us. We need the full cooperation and constructive criticism and suggestions of each of you, and the agencies you represent, to make it a success.

VII

LIBRARY SERVICE FOR BLIND CHILDREN

By Mr. Charles Gallozzi
Assistant Chief
Division for the Blind
The Library of Congress

It has been said that reading is one of the few solitary vices which are not considered either illegal or immoral. As a librarian, it is naturally part of my creed that reading is good, that it is to be encouraged, and that library service offers to its users advantages not readily available through any other facility. Instruction, entertainment, inspiration, and quite often just an escape from the daily pressures and conflicts are rewards enough. But just as important, possibly even more far-reaching, is the ability to participate vicariously in the activity and development of the culture of the entire world. In no other way can a person, in the comfort of his own home, explore the exotic ways of other peoples, live through the excitement of history in the making, become familiar with the thinking and the dreaming of both the great and the not so great. Radio and television, in their own way, provide access to most of these possibilities, but neither can approach the impact and the more permanent effect of the book.

It is one of the basic principles of library service that any effort at encouraging reading should aim first of all at removing obstacles. Books must be readily available to be widely read. They should present no difficulty in the reading process, should result in enjoyment and satisfaction, with a minimum of frustration.

From a librarian's point of view there is practically no library service available for those who can read only large size type. The few books produced in large print are almost exclusively for classroom use. The broad fields of supplementary and recreational books which public libraries offer school children and adults with normal sight do not exist for anyone dependent on oversize type. To what extent the children now in classes for partially seeing can be developed into lifetime readers, and what would be the point of doing so, if it were possible, are questions which cannot be answered at this time.

The outlook for the braille reader is somewhat better, but again does not compare even remotely with that of the reader of ordinary print. The entire country's braille resources are concentrated in a few regional libraries and schools. The ability to drop into a library and browse through a collection is available to only the few blind persons living in the immediate

vicinity of a regional library. The size and weight of braille books are obstacles which discourage many persons from doing as much reading as would otherwise be possible. The difficulty of braille reading is the main hazard which most blind persons fail to overcome. The ability to read braille fluently enough to be enjoyable is an achievement which is not widely realized. Of the more than 60,000 persons using the regional libraries for the blind, only about 10,000 use braille books.

The talking book has obviously overcome more obstacles than either the large type book or the braille book, for more than 50,000 persons read an average of twenty-five books each e year. Yet there is a machine between the recording and the individual, the books are concentrated in thirty regional libraries, and records become difficult to listen to after they are worn or scratched. But the fine quality of a good talking book, coupled with good service from regional libraries has made this medium very popular.

At this time the immediate future holds but little hope that availability of books in large type will improve sufficiently to have a noticeable effect on adults who could profit from them. Any progress seems to be concentrated in the field of juvenile literature. The availability of braille is constantly improving, but the reading difficulties and the problems of bulk appear to be permanent factors. Oddly enough, it is in the field of recordings, already the most widely used of the three media, that technology offers the greatest promise. The cost, size, weight and short life of the talking books are all being studied. Slower speed recordings on records, and recordings on magnetic tape both offer advantages which may shortly make the talking book far more readily available, lower in cost, smaller in size, lighter in weight, and more durable. If these possibilities prove to become realities, the number of libraries circulating them can be increased, with more personal attention to specific needs of individuals as a natural result. Books of limited interest, as well as more of the books of general interest can be offered, and the waiting period for popular books can be reduced by having more copies produced. The affect of these factors will be more reading by more individuals.

While the prospects for recordings are reported optimistically, the importance of braille remains undiminished. For intensive reading and study, as well as for the satisfaction gained from personal interpretation, there is no substitute for braille. To a large extent a recording in its present form is similar to the ancient scroll in that it is not easy to find a given passage, or to index it. Braille retains the advantages of the printed book format, in that pagination and indexing are feasible. Braille is also durable and portable, does not require mechanical or electronic equipment in order to be read, and can be written with simple tools. Those persons who have become proficient braille readers find that they get a great deal more out of it than when they try recordings. Library statistics prove that only a small proportion of the braille readers are also consistent users of talking books.

All libraries cooperate in many ways, since the handling of books bring with it the wish to make others aware of the benefits to be gained from them. Libraries for the blind are probably more cooperative than others, for they are the only ones to my knowledge which will lend to individuals in any part of the country simply upon request. They do not charge fines for overdue books, nor do they charge for any damage or loss. There is stil much to be done however, for the weak spot in this field of cooperation is the reporting of unique titles to a central point. The Division for the Blind of the Library of Congress maintains a union catalog of braille books, but we know that it does not completely reflect the country's braille resources. Much of the productive work of volunteer transcribers therefore does not get the widespread use it deserves. There is no central reporting of the recording activities of volunteers. Better use of recorded material, possible through a central listing, could do much to take some of the pressure off braille transcribers, allowing them to concentrate on material not already available to the blin

In keeping with the removal of obstacles to reading, professional standards of quality in the production of both braille and recordings, are essential. Poor transcribing can do more harm than good, proofreading must be thorough. Just as a sloppily prepared meal can cause indigestion, a sloppily prepared book can cause frustration. To a librarian, a frustrated reader means a lost reader, and that is more serious than indigestion.

The foregoing discussion might seem to present more problems than accomplishments in library service as made available to blind persons in this country. There are many hopeful signs, however, which are apparent in meetings of this type where an appropriate number of representatives from national groups concerned with these problems and also a selected group of local and state people who have specific needs and unique contributions to offer, gather for the purpose of pooling their resources. Surely more answers will come as we are able to clarify our goals and procedures. Already there are expanded efforts to enrich all of the libraries through a greater contribution of volunteer transcribers and recorders with systematic contribution and study as evidenced by the National Braille Club. Serious consideration has been given to various aspects of coordination of efforts both on the part of the American Printing House for the Blind and the Library of Congress in plans for the development of catalogs listing both recorded and braille materials which will provide service both to the educators who help children develop a keen interest in and use of their libraries and the larger number of blind readers of all ages who must know which books are available and in which media, in order to select the desired books.

PANEL I

NATIONAL RESOURCES

THE VOLUNTEER BRAILLE TRANSCRIBING PROGRAM OF THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

by Mr. Charles Gallozzi, Assistant Chief, Division for the Blind,
Library of Congress

RECORDING FOR THE BLIND, INC.

by Mrs. Annette O'Neill, Coordinator of Production
Recording for the Blind, Inc.

THE NATIONAL BRAILLE CLUB, ITS GROWTH AND ITS AIMS

by Mrs. George L. Turkeltaub, Editor of
The National Braille Club Bulletin

NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF BLINDNESS

by Miss Helen Gibbons, Consultant in Education
National Society for the Prevention of Blindness

AMERICAN PRINTING HOUSE FOR THE BLIND PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE

by Dr. Alton G. Kloss, Chairman
Superintendent, Western Pennsylvania School for the Blind

AMERICAN PRINTING HOUSE FOR THE BLIND COMMITTEE OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE DIRECTORS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

by Mrs. Dorothy T. Guild, Chairman
Supervisor of Programs for the Visually Handicapped
Delaware State Department of Public Instruction

THE VOLUNTEER BRAILLE TRANSCRIBING PROGRAM OF THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

By Mr. Charles Gallozzi
Assistant Chief
Division for the Blind
Library of Congress

The program of the Division for the Blind of the Library of Congress is, naturally enough, a library program. Books of broad interest and popular appeal are provided in multiple copies either embossed in braille, or recorded on talking book records. The number of titles made available is limited by the funds available, but the scope roughly approximates that of public circulating libraries.

To provide books of limited interest, or others which could not be otherwise produced because of the costs involved, the Division is active in training volunteer braille transcribers and proofreaders. Normally the proofreaders, who are blind, are paid by the page, but the transcribers, who are not blind, are volunteers in the true sense of the word. No pressure is placed on them to enter this work, they are taught braille free of charge, and no pressure is placed on them to produce work. The transcriber's course is a long and difficult one, with high standards of accuracy. Only a small fraction of those who start the course complete it. These graduates have usually deve loped a genuine interest in braille and their contribution to the material made available to the blind is immeasurable.

For many years most of the work of volunteers was done specifically for the Library of Congress or the regional libraries for the blind. The recent developments currently under discussion have resulted, among other things, in a smaller percentage of the hand-copied braille reaching these libraries. From our point of view this has two undesirable effects: volunteers trained by the Library are not producing library books, and braille produced for individuals does not get the continued use it would if it had reached a library.

The collections in the regional libraries and in the Library of Congress are available to any blind person in any part of the country completely free of charge, and generally under pretty liberal loan conditions. Our aim, in training and cooperating with volunteers, is to increase this type of service as much as possible.

As to educational materials, the Division for the Blind of the Library of Congress is primarily concerned with books which fall into the category

known as collateral or supplementary reading. Textbooks are normally out of our province, even though the definition of a textbook is often relative. Any work which can be profitably and enjoyably read by an individual, without the necessity of the services of a teacher or instructor, could be considered appropriate for our program. This does not mean that we are opposed to volunteers working specifically for individuals, or to their producing textbook material. In fact, we are gratified that the plan to build up library collections has been found to be so valuavle in the provision of schoolbooks. But we are naturally concerned that at the very time when more and stronger demands are being made on us for books definitely within our responsibility, part of our source is being diverted into the school program, even though it is just as worthy. If the textbooks thus created at the expense of library books were sooner or later to be placed in libraries, and made available free of charge to any blind person in the country, then it could be felt that the use of volunteers for the school program also helps the library program.

It must be emphasized that the Division for the Blind does not in any way wish to add difficulties to the textbook problem or to control volunteers. We do set up standards for acceptable braille for libraries, and hope that these standards are being maintained in all braille work. Volunteers retain the right to decide how they will use their time, while libraries generally will accept only complete books which have been proofread. Any plan which recognizes these two viewpoints and furthers the interests of blind readers generally, can be called a sound one and worthy of support. If handcopied books can be quickly duplicated and a copy deposited in the Library of Congress or a regional library for the blind, then the volunteers have the satisfaction of knowing that the individual who first requested a text will get it, school authorities who have funds or quota allotments can get it, and there will be a copy available on free loan to fill needs which could not otherwise be met.

The need for a clearing house or union catalog is obvious. To be effective, complete cooperation is needed. Availability is the keyword in such a plan, for there is little point in listing a book which cannot be made abailable on request. Therefore, any book deposited in a library, or produced in multiple form should be listed centrally, and access to such a listing should be free and simple. The catalog of the American Printing House for the Blind and the Union Catalog of Hand-Copied Books in Braille of the Library of Congress are tools which should be consulted by every volunteer before a new title is transcribed. A supplement to the union catalog is now in process, and will include all braille books in the libraries for the blind other than the press braille produced for our program which is listed separately because of its wide distribution. We shall be glad to cooperate with any plan to establish quick, effective, central reporting which would not only eliminate unnecessary duplication of effort but also make best use of material already available.

RECORDING FOR THE BLIND, INC.

By Mrs. Annette O'Neill
Coordinator of Production
Recording for the Blind, Inc.

Recording for the Blind, Inc. is a national, nonprofit organization established in May, 1951 with a three-year terminal grant from the Fund for Adult Education. It records textbooks and other educational material, free of charge, for any legally blind college student or adult. As a service to the individual, its aim is to meet the needs of all individuals seeking the education that will enable them to become economically independent and productive members of their communities.

Each year the demands upon the service have increased and each year has also seen an appreciable increase in the total number of titles recorded. More than 4,000 recorded books h a v e b e e n made to date. Of this number, little more than half are still in circulation. During these years, it has been possible to meet about 70 percent of the requests received.

Until late in 1957, the recording was done with the Soundscriber machine so that most of the titles were recorded in single copy only. A small percentage was produced in a special monitored program, recorded first on tape and reproduced with the special embossing facilities of the American Foundation for the Blind, making ten copies of each title.

This special program, coupled with the fact that the national need for any one title was obviously much greater than a single copy recording could provide, led to a plan whereby all titles would first be recorded on tape and then reproduced on discs in the number of copies required.

In 1957 enough funds at last became available to make this plan a reality. Each recording unit acquired tape recorders to replace the Soundscriber machines. The embossing center was set up in New York where the tapes recorded at the units are embossed on discs - making a minimum of three copies and a maximum of thirty-six copies simultaneously. There are ninety-six turntables in all, now being operated on two shifts. The discs so produced play at a speed of 16 2/3 rpm - the same speed which was incorporated in 1957 in the Library of Congress Model D talking book machine.

Nineteen fifty eight was the first full year in which this equipment has been in

operation. With it, almost 500 titles have been recorded during the year, for a total of approximately 2,000 recorded books. Continuing at the current pace, it is reasonable to believe that in 1959 about 1,000 titles can be recorded, making a total of 5,000 to 6,000 recorded books.

Another factor which made 1958 a year of definite progress, was the establishment of four new recording units - in Berkshire County, Massachusetts; Charlottesville, Virginia; Detroit, Michigan; and Princeton, New Jersey. Another new unit in Miami has been chartered, but is only now starting to record.

These five new units bring the total to thirteen. The others are located at the University of Georgia in Athens; and in Chicago, Denver, Los Angeles, here is Louisville, New York City, Oak Ridge and Phoenix. Consideration is being given to the establishment of one or two more units during 1959.

With these facilities it is estimated that the expected increase in demand from college and adult fields can be satisfied. In 1958, the service was provided in whole or in part to about 500 college students and another 500 adults not formally enrolled in an educational institution. A year ago, a survey made by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare reported 915 legally blind students enrolled in colleges and universities in the United States and its possessions. Assuming this number is now 1,000 or a little more, there is a good percentage of another 500 such students who are potential users of the service.

In order to meet this expected increase in demand from the college and adult groups, the board of directors will be asked to raise the budget to $240,000 for the year of 1959. Last year the operating cost was $145,000; the year before less than $100,000. This represented a gradual increase from a budget of $25,000 in 1952 - the first full year of operation.

This indicates what has had to be done to reach the point where it appears likely that the service can be made available to all young men and women in college who need it. Also, there are the adults not formally enrolled in classes but to whom we provide the service. The 500 or so of these whom we now are serving are probably a relatively small percentage of all those who could use it with profit. There are the teachers - in the schools, colleges and universities; others are professional people, such as lawyers, chiropractors, social workers, insurance men. Then there are the farmers, radio amateurs, an upholsterer, a tailor, a gunsmith.

We don't know how far service for these adults can extend, nor estimate what may be required to meet it. We are only confident that soon we can meet college student requirements.

While this remains our current goal, it has not been possible to make any plans for extending the service to the younger groups beyond the relatively small amount of high school recordings that have been made in special instances.

The service has been one for adults because initially it was set up for this sole purpose under the terms of the grant from the Fund for Adult Education. Also, it was a development of the work carried on during the late forties for the blinded war veterans who were returning to college under the GI Bill of Rights.

Now, with the developing trend everywhere to integrate blind children in classes with sighted children in the public schools, we are aware of the increasing need there is and will be for recorded school texts to supplement the materials already available.

The research being made in 8 1/3 rpm recordings offers the possibility of increasing production without an increase in cost. This would be an important factor in extending the scope. However, that is at least a year away.

Also, consideration is being given to ways and means of establishing proper organizational procedures that would enable Recording for the Blind to provide recorded texts to the school groups throughout the country, where the requirements vary to a great extent from group to group. This presents a considerable problem which cannot be solved without the active cooperation of the communities where the service is needed. Here again, it will probably be at least a year before definite plans can take shape. We want to see Recording for the Blind remain as a service to the individual - but able to bring it to many more individuals than is currently possible.

THE NATIONAL BRAILLE CLUB
ITS GROWTH AND ITS AIMS

By Mrs. George L. Turkeltaub
Editor of
The National Braille Club Bulletin

Those of you who may be members of the National Braille Club or those of you who have seen or read a copy of its bulletin, would have found under the heading of its name the following, "An Organization for the advancement of volunteer service for blind people." In another area of the Bulletin, these wordsappear: "Object: To bring together a group of volunteer workers in one organization to carry forward an educational program by keeping volunteers in touch with the research work of existing agencies and with changes and improvements in their given areas of service."

I doubt that the eighty-five interested persons who met in July 1945 and fathered The Braille Club, as it was then called, really and truly expected to achieve the "Object" of the Club, stated above in such idealistic terms, although they may have hoped it would come about. Yet, happily enough, the seed planted so long ago, slowly but surely sprouted, grew and flowered, and may yet achieve just such a unification as they have dreamed.

Let us go back a bit and watch the growth and progress of the dream. On that day in July 1945, men and women from fourteen states, the District of Columbia, Canada, China, Peru and Puerto Rico met to begin The Braille Club. The following year the Bulletin or Newsletter was published to keep members informed of progress made. The membership grew slowly. In May 1949, it was decided that a merit award system for volunteers would be installed as part of the Club, in order to encourage and reward them in their chosen field of endeavor. The first merit award pins were distributed in 1950 to members in many areas. This was a wise step on the part of the Club. You may say, "It is not made of gold and the stones are synthetic." But, to the people who received them, the gold shone brightly and the stones glittered like stars. For these pins represented the work of their hearts and their hands, as well as their love for their fel-

lowman. It was more welcome than the finest gift, and is to this day.

In May 1952, there was another step forward. The Braille Club Bulletin began to publish a record of all the work which its members completed. Thereafter, all work completed between publications would appear in the forthcoming issue, so that everyone throughout the country would know what had been hand-transcribed or soundscribed.

What was the purpose of this? A very intelligent and carefully planned purpose. The executive board knew that in a few years there would be a tremendous demand for textbooks for an unprecedented number of blind children. There was another purpose behind all this, the hope that these same children would be able to attend school with their sighted companions.

Meanwhile many small groups throughout the country began to build up their braille units, increasing not only the number of braillists, but the number of teachers as well, who would go forth to other areas in order to teach. From my own experience I can state that from Great Neck, Long Island, we had teachers going to Glen Cove, Port Washington, Roslyn,Jamaica, Flushing, Kew Gardens and Forest Hills. In one year, we had twelve instructors giving lessons in braille at home and elsewhere with about 140 students enrolled. We started many small new units. Other units in some states were following the trend and sending teachers to other areas while building up their own. Recording units started in new areas, others build up their programs.

We now had approximately 350members from all over the country and in 1955 the name was officially changed to The National Braille Club. The listing of completed work published in the Bulletin grew longer and longer. The children who needed us became of age and in many areas were being accepted in our public schools, on condition that they be supplied with the necessary books.

Things became desperate, for from all over the country came requests for books. Could we get this book? Was there a copy of such and such? Someone had seen such a book listed in our bulletin, could they have it? In 1955 we had requested that all reports of completed work be sent to us on a postcard, with one item listed to a card. Many complied with our request.

As editor, these reports came to me and I started an alphabetical index file for textbooks so that I could find the requested item more readily, discover where and by whom it had been transcribed and send this information on to the inquirer. Our corresponding secretary was also bombarded with these requests for they were legion. No one person could take care of them.

Now another problem arose. In many areas the same books were being hand-transcribed at the same time. There must be some way to prevent this waste. There had to be a duplicating system which could use the first original transcribed copy. One had been found, but the result gave not paper impressions, but transparent plastic impressions. They were not satisfactory.

At some of our dinner meetings, transcribers from outlying areas approached members of the board for information regarding the handling of problems in textbook material, such as pictures in spelling books or other picture problems. We had been fortunate in teaching and learning braille to have had teaching materials such as the Library of Congress manual, the Loomis manual, the New Dot Writing and the Transcribers Guide for Standard English Braille. We now had a braille mathematics code book, but none of these answered the problems we faced in transcribing for the very young.

In my own area, we had formed a Braille Club which had included many of the groups we had taught. We met and thrashed out many of our problems as best we could and exchanged ideas. New Jersey had similar meetings for the same purpose and they were held in other areas.

Now the National Braille Club came into action. We decided that we would have a national conference and in October 1957, the first national conference of the National Braille Club took place with results far beyond our fondest expectations. Approximately 300 persons, both volunteer and professional workers, representing states across the nation, accepted our invitation to come to the conference. They came, asking the same questions, seeking answers to the same things. How to do this? How to do that? Can we have books duplicated which have already been transcribed?

Mr. Finis Davis, the speaker at our dinner meeting that year, promised that the American Printing House for the Blind would bring something in the near future to answer this problem. His promise came true shortly after that and the Printing House announced that it would duplicate from the original onto braille sheets of paper and produce multiple copies. This was a tremendous advance. Braillists would now be able to concentrate on new material, as duplicates would be made from original copies.

However, the executive committee of the National Braille Club was not content. As soon as the first conference was over, plans were being made for the next one to take place in October 1958. We still needed unification in the methods of transcribing different textbooks. Arithmetic loomed as a tremendous problem, since the Nemeth Mathematical Code glossed over this area and concerned itself mainly with algebra, geometry and higher mathematics. And here too were problems. Needed symbols were missing. Interpretation of the code varied with individuals.

The committees which were set up worked together to bring to the next conference something concrete. It brought forth many ideas on textbook material, illustrative work, recording and on a sample manual for the purpose of teaching the use of the mathematics code in the field of arithmethic. When finished, it will be a simple set of gradual steps on how to learn and use the mathematical code for those transcribing arithmetic. A second committee is working on the higher mathematical area. The results of their work will cover the entire code book, with a systemized index, making it possible to find material quickly.

All of this, we hope, will meet the approval of the mathematical committee and also of the author of the original code. The teaching manual will also have to have their approval. The present code book will still be used as a means of transcribing mathematics into braille.

The other committees formed are working on their problems, so that at our next conference we may have many answers to things that have plagued our transcribers.

Meanwhile it was decided that the records of transcribed material, which were kept in my home, be housed in a central area. This was fitting and proper as they did not belong in the home of a private individual. The Printing House agreed and has taken over these records and is cataloging and filing them. As announced, they will retain all textbook material from kindergarten through the twelfth grade. The balance will be sent to the Library of Congress for cataloging. Therefore, all reports on all work are to be sent from now on to the Printing House on special forms issued by them. They will in turn report to the National Braille Club on the completed work.

Since our first conference last year (1957), our membership has more than doubled. We now have over 900 members scattered throughout the country.

What else do we, the National Braille Club seek? We would like to ask you from other areas in the country to try to unify the units in your areas. Get together with them. Discuss your problems. Send them to the Club. We expect to have a board of directors consisting of twelve persons from various parts of the country. We also expect to select a nunber of persons throughout the country to be part of an editorial staff, so that they can send in reports to us for publication.

Contact your teachers. Meet with them. Find out what they want. Tell them to anticipate their needs and get them to you in early spring for the fall term and vice-versa.

Speaking for many volunteers, I feel that now that we know we can go ahead and hope we will not have to duplicate material unnecessarily, I know that working in unity with the organizations for the blind and with the schools and the teachers will certainly ease matters and give us greater incentive to go on. We know we can, by working together, accomplish what the Braille Club originally set out to do and in a manner far beyond their expectations.

NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF BLINDNESS

By Miss Helen Gibbons
Consultant in Education
National Society for the Prevention of Blindness

It is a pleasure to have the opportunity to present at a meeting such as this the functions and services of the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness. As a national voluntary health agency in the field of prevention of blindness, the Society is concerned with demonstrating needs and, by staff activities and funds, expanding services not always provided through the regular channels of the official agencies.

The Society's education department is interested in alerting those concerned with education to the need for good eye health and care for all children, as well as in promoting educational services for the partially seeing. To be sure that all here are clear on what is meant by "partially seeing children" a brief definition is "those children who, after the best possible correction, have vision in the better eye of 20/70 or less and who can use vision as their chief channel of learning."

Through its national and state affiliates, and as an individual group with other health agencies, the Society strives to bring about needed legislation for medical, protective and educational means to facilitate the above aims. It carries on studies to give bases for recommendations. For example, the Society's recommendation that annual vision screening be provided for all children results from knowledge of the physiological changes which can occur in the eye during growth.

The National Society, and especially the education department, has the benefit of counsel from an advisory committee on education of partially seeing children whose membership includes state directors of special education, directors of social work, of teacher education

and the classroom teacher. Through such counseling the department is alerted to needs and the practical application of theory.

The education consultant cooperates with various state education departments in setting up teacher standards and certification requirements, and contributes to teacher education by activities in in-service training institutes and in regular summer school sessions. Summer sessions include college and university courses for regular teachers at the elementary and secondary level, those in general education as well as those in health and special education.

In the past the Society's education department was responsible for developing a basic course essential to teachers of partially-seeing children; the department continues to have a deep and active interest in such college and university programs where they are offered.

In addition to working with official agencies, the Society cooperates with various volunteer service groups such as Delta Gamma Fraternity. Through its volunteers trained by the Society's staff, Delta Gamma assists in preschool vision screening. This is felt to be a particularly important activity in prevention since by this means can be discovered those children who need more complete eye examinations. Delta Gamma also has been generous in providing scholarships for basic preparation of teachers of the partially seeing.

The Junior League has assisted in vision screening projects and in the preparation of large-print materials. Lions Clubs have contributed scolarship funds and materials and equipment for classrooms.

The National Society makes available printed materials on education of partially seeing children, on eye health and safety of all children, and on vision screening. The textbook, Education and Health of the Partially Seeing Child, has long been recognized as an outstanding one in the area of preparing teachers to work with partially seeing children. It is now in its 4th revision and hopefully will be ready for distribution in the early summer.

Films on eye health and safety are available either on a rental basis or for purchase, through the Society's office. One on educating the partially-seeing child in the regular grades is "A Fair Chance for Tommy;" "Betty Sees a Bird," is designed to prepare volunteers or nurses to test visual acuity of preschool children.

The National Society's annual conferences are held alternately in New York City and in other areas. The conference always includes one full session on education of partially seeing children.

The Society tries to be a clearing house on information for various persons in education and is always glad to be of further assistance when called upon.

AMERICAN PRINTING HOUSE FOR THE BLIND
PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE

by Dr. Alton G. Kloss
Chairman, Superintendent
Western Pennsylvania School for the Blind

In ordering books and materials through the federal act "To Promote the Education of the Blind," the recipients of quota allotments can expend their credits in two ways--by ordering items listed in the published Printing House catalogs, or by directing the Printing House to manufacture items within the province of its facilities. In the second case, of course, the entire cost of manufacture of such books or materials must be paid for by the ordering agency, including the cost of the original plates for printing, the masters for talking books, dies and jigs for special equipment, and so on. Items listed in Printing House catalogs, however, are available at the listed catalog prices. Examination of these prices indicate that they are roughly in two brackets, i. e., books, etc., which are published or manufactured under the authority of the Printing House itself, and those which are offered at the reprint price only, the full plate costs having previously been paid for by some particular agency or school. In this second category belong all titles published to the order of the Library of Congress and other agencies, and consist primarily of library and fiction titles for all age groups. From time to time quota recipients also direct the Printing House to publish particular titles for their use, and, if they are of general interest, they are also listed in the catalog at the reprint price.

The general bulk of Printing House publishing, however, as listed in our printed catalogs, is comprised largely of textbooks and supplementary materials for school use, and all of them have been selected for publication on the basis of demand from the residential, and, more recently, the state departments of education representing the public schools. The original Act of 1879 stipulated that once each year the Printing House should survey the recipients of the quota allocations for recommendations for books to be published through the Act, and further stated that those titles for which there is the greatest demand should be published. To expedite this selection process, the Printing House as far back as 1904 set up a Publications Committee, now composed of five ex-officio Trustees who have delegated to them the arduous work of canvassing the schools for recommendations, and making the final decisions on materials to be published. At the present time this committee consists of myself as chairman; Dr. Francis M. Andrews, superintendent of the Maryland School for the Blind; Dr. Eber L. Palmer, superintendent of the New York State School for the Blind; Mr. Egbert N. Peeler, superintendent of the North Carolina School for the Blind and Deaf; and Dr. Edward J. Waterhouse, director of Perkins School for the Blind. In addition to the above five members of the Publications Comittee, elected by the whole board of trustees for a period of five years, on a rotating basis, so that one new member comes on each year, the committee has authority to seek the aid and advice of any and all authorities in specialized fields as they may deem necessary.

In selecting the materials to be published the pro edures are as follows:

1. Early in each calendar year, a general request for recommendations, over the signature of the chairman of the committee, is sent to the superintendents of the schools for the blind and the individuals in the state departments of education designated to administer quota procedures. In this connection, it should be noted that, in the hope of providing for an orderly growth in catalog offerings, a schedule has been set up for requests for

recommendations in particular subject fields. This schedule provides for varying three- to five-year cycles of recommendations in the various textbook fields, depending upon subjects involved. For instance, new basic reading series should be added or replaced say every three years. The same holds for social studies and elementary science, while arithmetic books and advanced mathematics, as well as English grammar texts may not need to be done more than every five years, and so on. Additionally, books in many subject fields, such as typing, or industrial arts, speech, biology, physics, or what have you, may not need to be published on a regular schedule, and so are listed in the schedule as "on demand," requests for recommendations for such titles being listed when it is felt they are needed.

2. In making the request for recommendations from the schools and the state departments of education, a period of about three months is allowed, so that the individual teachers in both the residential schools and the public schools can be contacted and consulted for specific title recommendations.

3. All recommendations are directed to be sent to the Printing House, so that they may be referred to Miss Hooper's department for processing. This processing consists of typing the information given for each title on regular catalog cards, identifying them for publishers' catalogs, etc., and classifying them as to subjects, grade levels, etc. This work also includes trying to run down the latest copyright of a particular title, since one of the standards set up by the Publications Committee eliminates from consideration any textbook which carries a copyright date of more than a two-to three-year vintage. Of course, such a ruling does not apply to certain types of library books, the classics, fiction, and the like.

4. In the fall of each year, immediately prior to the annual meeting of the board of trustees, the Publications Committee meets with the Printing House staff in Louisville to go over the list of recommendations received and classified for their consideration. At this meeting all the recommendations received are evaluated, and the Printing House is given a list of preferred choices in each subject field approved and directed to put into publication the book, or books, which seem, in the opinion of the Printing House staff, or because of attendant circumstances, the best for the purpose. In this connection may I say that the "opinion of the Printing House staff" is based upon such considerations as manner of presentation of material; for instance, the material may be presented in almost entirely visual form, requiring too much editing for intelligent reproduction in braille, or to be in such bad ink type as to be even worse when blown up for large type. May I also point out that "the attendant circumstances" which may preclude choice of a book include such items as inability to obtain permission to reprint, information from the publishers that a new edition is coming out in a year or two, etc. Additionally, the Printing House must give guidance to the committee in making its choices so that the books chosen will give the production departments a balanced quota of work-not all technical books one year, and easy copy the next. A total quota of production must also be chosen that will be within the limits of the facilites of the Printing House to complete within the twelve-month period. The expansion and contraction of production departments cannot be done willy-nilly, particularly in such technical procedures as braille embossing (it takes two years at least to train a good braille stereotypist to do an expert job on a somewhat technical book, such as a book on economics, and need only one proofreading) or to make available manufacturing floor-space, expensive equipment, and semiskilled labor for other processes.

5. Following the publications committee meeting, the Printing House immediately writes to the various publishers for permission to reprint, and orders copies of

the recommended books for examination. Decision is then made as to the particular books to be published, and production is started as rapidly as possible. In this connection all basic textbooks chosen for publication are parallelled in both braille and large print form.

6. Finally, when the individual books are nearing completion and their publication dates can be fairly well determined, they are listed in the Printing House catalog supplements and advertised to the schools and state departments of education for orders, so that when the printing plates are ready for press, sufficient orders can be on hand to go ahead with the first editions.

You will note from the above outline of procedures that the books published under the auspices of the Printing House Publications Committee are chosen entirely on the basis of the recommendations made to it by the schools for the blind and the state departments of education. It is for this reason that it is so important that the schools and the state departments of education pay heed to the requests for recommendations, and do a little intensive ground work themselves to get proper recommendations to the Printing House. It is almost a case of "if you don't ask, you won't receive," and if the recommendations that come in are poor or meager, the publications committee has little choice but to either choose from the "poor pickings" presented, or turn all recommendations down and ask for more the next year. In this connection I should like to point out that the Printing House staff has made a very great effort to ascertain what are the most popular texts being used in sighted schools throughout the country, and to help give guidance to the committee in its decisions as to what books would prove of most use to the greatest number-whether they be students in schools for the blind or in the public schools. Further, they have recommended that an additional staff person be added to the editorial department who would have background in textbook selection and who would spend full time on the problems of textbook needs throughout the country. Your committee hopes this position can be filled in the near future.

Please understand that the Printing House Publications Committee, as well as staff, are not entirely satisfied that the above procedures provide the best mechanics possible for the selection of books to be published. However, to date, these are the best procedures we have been able to develop which also comply with the law requiring that the quota recipients be canvassed for recommendations, and the books for which there are the greatest demand be chosen for publication. We would welcome constructive suggestions.

Miss Abel has asked that I give you a few statistics. For purposes of the annual reports, the Printing House does not keep its production statistics for quota materials separate from other materials manufactured in the plant, since they overlap rather considerably. However, for the year ending June 30, 1958, of the approximately 98,000 braille plates embossed, over 46,000 were new book plates of textbooks published under the auspices of the publications committee, approximately 5,800 were for quota magazines, about 1,000 special school magazines charged to quotas, plus 4,000 Readers Digest plates. Additionally, about 2,000 plates were embossed for special books published to the order of individual schools, also charged to quota accounts. This makes a grand total of about 59,000 plates embossed for quota purposes during the past year. Presumably, the same production will be true this year, with somewhat of an increase in all probability.

AMERICAN PRINTING HOUSE FOR THE BLIND
COMMITTEE OF THE
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE DIRECTORS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

by Mrs. Dorothy T. Guild
Chairman
Supervisor of Programs for the Visually Handicapped
Delaware State Department of Public Instruction

As a part of the work of the National Association of State Directors of Special Education, a standing committee, the American Printing House for the Blind Committee was appointed with rotating membership to insure continuity of its work. Particularly since the increase of enrollment of legally blind children in public schools, the work of this committee has become important and of greater interest to representatives of all the states. Now that state departments of education must report all legally blind children enrolled in public schools and order books and supplies for them from federal quota, clear cut communication between state representatives and the American Printing House for the Blind is of paramount importance. This manner of reporting and ordering being relatively new means that all state departments are faced with establishing a feasible plan for handling this work. The National Association of State Directors through discussion at its meetings realizes that, even though the pattern must vary from state to state, many problems are shared in common. It felt that the committee could work with representatives of the Printing House and later share, with the National Association of State Directors, all matters discussed, in an effort to facilitate the most efficient handling of quota. The association, being a national one affiliated with the Council for Exceptional Children, is in a position to make recommendations supporting good legislation and good over-all educational planning for legally blind children. However, it must be fully informed of needs, resources and interdiciplinary philosophy and goals, if its efforts are to be coordinated with that of other groups. The association at its annual meetings receives reports from all of its committees. I know that at the meeting this spring, there will be great interest in the report of the results of the meeting we are now attending sponsored by the American Foundation for the Blind and the American Printing House for the Blind. Since this ties in so closely with the work of the committee, we will be reporting to the National Association of State Directors even though we are not officially representing them here.

The association will welcome reports from any group interested in and working for a good educational program for legally blind children. As chairman of the committee, I would like to extend an invitation to all here to present to us, at any time, suggestions for ways in which the association can be of help in improving educational services to this particular group of children.

I feel sure that the members of the committee would want me to extend thanks from all of us for the privilege of attending this interesting and informative conference.

PANEL II

PREPARATION OF MATERIAL IN LARGE TYPE

Chairman: Miss Helen Gibbons, Consultant in Education
National Society for the Prevention of Blindness

Participants:

Mrs. Dorothy D. Bryan, Assistant to the Director
Division for Exceptional Children
Blind and Partially Seeing
Illinois State Department of Public Instruction

Miss Dorothy L. Misbach
Consultant in the Education of the Visually
Handicapped, State of California Department
of Education

Recorder: Miss Edith Cohoe, Supervisor, Classes for Blind
and Partially Seeing
Department of Special Education
Detroit Board of Education

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION BY MISS HELEN GIBBONS

Miss Gibbons spoke from the national level. Partially seeing children are not as quickly or as easily identified as are the blind. For this reason we must first find partially seeing children before considering materials.

It is recommended that schools have annual vision screening in order to locate children with visual defects. By means of vision screening and follow-up, it has been determined that 25 per cent of all children have eye defects which require corrective glasses or other helps. It is from among this group that we will find also those children who have vision problems severe enough to require some adjustments in their educational programs. A conservative ratio has indicated the prevalence to be one in 500 of the school enrollment.

Visually handicapped children are divided into two groups--the partially seeing who can read print, and the blind who use the tactile sense. Partially seeing children have vision of 20/70 or less in the better eye after the best possible correction and use their eyes as the chief avenue of learning. At the present time, only 10 per cent of the partially seeing children in the United States are being given the special help which they need. The teacher of these children should have special training and preparation in order to understand their medical and educational problems.

The following kinds of materials are used by partially seeing children:

1. Printed materials. These were formerly teacher prepared. Now the teacher has other sources. Certain standard texts in large type are available from some publishing houses. These include the American Printing House, Stanwix Publishing House and Harcourt Brace. In addition, volunteers such as members of the Delta Gamma Fraternity and Civil Service clerks help in the preparation of large-type materials.
2. Auditory materials. It is very important for partially seeing children to develop good listening skills so that they do not need to rely entirely on vision. Among the auditory aids are commercial tapes and recordings. Special teachers, regular grade students, and volunteers also make recordings. In addition, students as well as the special teachers read certain material to partially seeing children.
3. Magnifiers. These are grouped into hand, stand, and projection magnifiers. Magnifiers are especially good for reading reference work and certain amounts of newsprint. Low-vision lenses give help to a number of students.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION BY MRS. DOROTHY D. BRYAN

A basic philosophy must be established before consideration of any phase of a program can be undertaken. Illinois believes that every child is entitled to an education that will enable him to develop to his greatest capacity. It believes that as long as a child can use vision as his chief channel of learning he should have the opportunity to learn through sight, and in all possible

instances receive his education in his local school where he can be a participating member of his family group and of his school and community. In addition to benefitting the child, his whole community will gain from the association with him and develop a broader understanding of partially seeing individuals.

Partially seeing children are identified through the school census, referrals from doctors and parents, and by means of vision screening. Educational placement is the responsibility of the school administrator but must be based upon an evaluation of the child by means of ocular, educational, and psychological reports. In addition, information is obtained from health and social agencies.

At the present time there are several types of services available in the public schools of Illinois--special classes, resource rooms and itinerant teachers. In addition, some children stay in their "home school" but receive special services such as large-type books from the state's lending library. The teacher of these children receives guidance or consultant service from the State Department.

The materials and equipment are of many varieties depending upon the needs of the child--cause of visual loss, degree of vision, amount of vision and ability to use it, and whether the condition is progressive or stationary. Materials include large-type books, regular books, optical aids for near vision, magnifiers, tape recordings, commercial recordings and talking books. Other materials are prepared on the large-type or bulletin typewriters and some are done by hand. Some paid reader service is given. Reader service is also supplied by students, teachers and volunteers.

One county has a consultant in vision education. Each of these types of programs has one central depository for materials for partially seeing children. In several instances the large-print books are considered a part of the district or county library.

In its efforts to provide more adequately for all partially seeing children, California, on a trial basis, used the blown-up process for the preparation of one large book. Believing this to be unsatisfactory, the state is presently contracting with available sources for the production of the basic series of state textbooks in large print for grades three through eight. These books are being distributed through the county offices with the exception of the five largest cities which handle their own distribution. Volunteer groups on a local and state basis are preparing large print materials.

It would seem we have need for developing better listening skills for the young child, for increasing the use of the tape recorder, for availing ourselves of commercially prepared records, for legislating the use of the talking book for partially seeing students, for continuing the encouragement of optimum use of limited vision, and for considering the use of not only audio and optical aids but braille as well as print for students pursuing advanced education.

There are a number of unmet needs in planning for the education of partially seeing students. In considering these needs should we examine our present terminology? Are we limiting the use of some materials to only blind people when we might broaden the terms to include the partially seeing? For instance, "Recordings for the Blind" could be broadened to "Recordings for the Visually Handicapped".

We know how many partially seeing students are reported from state departments of education to be receiving service, but do we know how many partially seeing students are really receiving special help in the United States? Have we considered establishing a national registry of these children? Do we know how many students have borderline vision? Have we studied the special needs of these students?

Do we have any research helping us to ascertain the size of type needed for the various kinds of visual problems? Do we know what other factors are involved in ease in reading print? Should we consider research projects to aid objectively in clarifying present thinking?

Through conferences such as this we should gain the courage and the know-how for setting our goals high and should be prepared for assuming the responsibility for striving to attain them.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION BY MISS DOROTHY MISBACH

The preparation and distribution of materials for partially seeing children poses a number of problems for educators who are interested in seeing that each child has an opportunity to function at his maximum level. It would seem that each state should assume a leadership role in locating partially seeing children and should have some clear-cut goals established in planning educationally for them. In some states educators at the state level may assume a direct role in planning for low-visioned students while in other states this responsibility might be placed on local communities. Through legislation a number of states have made provisions for the education of blind children but little consideration has been given to the partially seeing child. The education of blind and partially seeing children should be a part of the general plan of providing facilities for all children.

The preparation and distribution of materials will of necessity vary with the types of programs in operation. In the special day class and in the cooperative program the teacher will play an active role in securing available materials and in the direct preparation of many of these materials. In the resource program it would seem there is even greater need for some on-going plan to provide for currently needed materials. Easy access to magnifiers and audio aids will assist in caring for immediate needs. Classmates assist with these immediate needs by reading materials not available at the lower grade level and paid reader service should be considered for low-visioned students at the secondary level.

Itinerant programs for partially seeing children are being encouraged. California points with pride to the successful program in Oakland where three teachers are working with approximately one hundred children. Several counties have established programs with itinerant teachers or a teacher-consultant.

The present program has the following strengths:

1. The increase of understanding and interest in all exceptional children benefits the partially seeing child.
2. There is an increased knowledge of the need for good visual environment for all children.
3. The program, which is in the 46th year in the United States, is a sound framework of knowledge in this field.
4. Medical advances and present-day thinking eliminate a concern of the past that vision is harmed through use.
5. More materials are being made available. Its weaknesses are:

1. Inadequate discovery and identification of partially seeing childern as well as lack of services for all children known to be partially seeing; the multiple handicapped, for example.
2. Lack of research to determine estimates of partially seeing children in the general population.
3. Attitudes resulting in either overprotection of the partially seeing child or an overoptimistic attitude regarding his ability to function without special help.
4. Duplication of effort and gaps in the reproduction of needed materials.
5. Lack of a simple method of reproducing large-type materials at the local level.
6. Insufficiency of valid tests, both psychological and achievement.
7. Too many books and materials which are clumsy and hard to manipulate. Future prospects seem bright for the following reasons:

1. There is more flexibility of thinking, coordination of effort, and medical advances.
2. There is a greater desire of schools to be responsible for their own children combined with an awareness of resources to help them plan.
3. There is more leadership available from national, state and local levels to insure clear thinking.
4. There are high standards, coordination of effort, and involvement of all disciplines concerned with partially seeing children.

General Discussion by Participants

What is the reason for the lack of large-type books for children above the upper elementary grades?

Dr. Nolan reported that the American Printing House is making a study of typography. The type size is being investigated in regard to the visual acuity in the population of partially seeing children--both for those legally blind and for those with better vision. It is also interesting to note that Stanwix House has studied use of 24-point print being read at a stationary distance of fourteen inches.

The importance of good posture must be kept in mind. Since many partially seeing children must hold the material very close, they bend over their work too much if a proper reading rack or copy holder is not provided. Realization of this may influence the choice of print size but other factors must be considered also. A child who can use smaller that 24-point to advantage should be allowed to do so within limitations. Adjustable book racks can be made in school woodworking shops and several kinds are available commercially.

A great amount of time is required for reading when the child has only a small amount of vision and eccentric fixation.

Typing by means of a typewriter with large type reduces the amount of close eye work for partially seeing children, and this enables them to complete assignments faster. The child should be taught the touch system of typewriting as soon as he is ready to master this skill.

There are still major problems in securing copyright permission when one or two copies of a text must be produced in large type for children with limited vision. This difficulty varies with publishers, and it is hoped that more clarification of this need and perhaps some national study of the problem might lead to some better answers than we have at the present time.

There is also need for more exploration of the audio materials used on both disc and

tape which can become such a vital part of the education of children with limited vision. Several educational departments of school systems and certain agencies which provide educational services for children with partial vision have developed materials which they can circulate to the children whom they serve. Many of these valuable texts have been produced by volunteers and they could be shared with other school systems if there were some type of clearing house. It is good to know that the American Printing House for the Blind is interested in this problem and it is to be hoped that more of the children will profit from the development of this service that could make possible greater sharing of materials among more school systems.

There was also discussion of the importance of selecting the size type which is based on the needs of each child with limited vision instead of following a practice which may be more economical in terms of cost of books but could be less effective whem the educational needs of all types of children are considered. A child, for example, who can read 18-point print with ease should not have to read 24-point type. Likewise, a child who needs 24-point type should not be deprived of books because there is only one type manufactured. Until there are more types available we shall have to use that which is available that meets the individual needs from commercial supply houses, and develop other materials through the use of paid typists and carefully selected volunteers. If we coordinate all of these sources, we will at least provide a selection of materials which will relate to the visual and educational needs of the children, and we shall be supplementing the work which all too often has to be done by the specialized teacher of these children.

Through meetings like this there are many opportunities for clarification and exchange of ideas from those direct service and administrative people who serve many types of handicapped children. This greater understanding should help in the referral of problems to those who can often provide good answers.

The various members of the group emphasized that when we talk about reference materials or texts for partially seeing children, developed in large print, recordings or tape, or the use of carefully selected magnifiers, we must recognize that two or more of these media may be used in varying degrees by each child. Thus, in many systems all of these media must be considered but school administrators and teachers recognize that each is valuable only in terms of its limited or extensive use by the child. It is the selection of the various types of media combined with a good teamwork approach which secures appropriate material for partially seeing children.

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